

# THE ARGOSY

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## THE WARDEN OF THE MARCHES

BY SYDNEY C. GRIER, AUTHOR OF "PEACE WITH HONOUR,"  
"LIKE ANOTHER HELEN," ETC., ETC.

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### CHAPTER VII

NONE BUT THE BRAVE—

**R**EALLY, Mab," said Dick irritably, "your horses are more bother than they are worth. Why don't you set up a motor-car?"

"How horrid you are, Dick! Any one would think it was my fault that all these things happen. How could I help Majnûn's getting kicked by one of the other horses when they were coming back from watering? I am sure it was that wretched Bayard of yours—cross old thing! At any rate, the syce declares it's impossible for Majnûn to go out to-day, and I can see it myself. You can go round and look at the state he's in."

"Oh, all right; I'll take your word for it. But what are you going to do?"

"The syce's sole idea is to send down to Mr. Anstruther's for Laili, but I will not ride her again just yet."

"No, I certainly won't have you mount her until Anstruther can give a better report of her proceedings. Well, you had better take Georgie's old Simorgh, as she and I are to do Darby and Joan in the dog-cart."

"He's so horribly and aggressively meek. I don't care for a horse whose sole title to distinction is that in prehistoric days he carried his mistress to Kubbet-ul-Haj and back without once running away. I want to ride Roy, Dick."

"My dear Mabel, pray have some regard for suitability. Will nothing but a mighty war-horse satisfy your aspiring mind?"

"That's just it. He's so big that it must feel like riding on an elephant. I should love to ride him, and you know it's perfectly safe. A child could manage him—you said so yourself."

"No, really, Mab. An appreciative country doesn't provide me with chargers merely to furnish a mount for you."

"Then I shall borrow a horse from somebody. Mr. Burgrave would lend me anything he possesses in the way of horseflesh—he said so," declared Mabel vindictively.

"I dare say, and rejoice when it came to grief, so that he might nobly refuse any compensation. Oh, take Roy, and Bayard too, if you like, and make a circus of the whole show, but don't put me under an obligation to Burgrave."

Mabel retired triumphant, as she had intended to do. It was the last day of the Christmas holidays, and the Alibad festivities were to close, as usual, with a picnic organised by Major and Mrs. North. Georgia had been up long before dawn, superintending the packing of provisions in the carts, which must set out as soon as it was light, and she was now resting in her own room. Without exactly knowing why, Mabel was relieved by her absence. Had his wife been at hand she would not have cared to employ the argument with which she had vanquished Dick, but she had no fear of his bearing malice or telling her about the dispute afterwards. As things were, when she was perched upon the back of Dick's great roan charger, she found that the grandeur of her position was its chief advantage. Roy was almost as uncomfortable to ride as a camel, and to Mabel, accustomed to her docile ponies, he seemed to have no mouth at all. She was thankful to receive a hint or two in managing him from his generous master, and thus forearmed, she was determined not to own herself defeated. Her mount aroused a good deal of surprise among her fellow-guests, and Mr. Hardy asked her benevolently if she would not have preferred an elephant, while Mr. Burgrave reminded her in reproachful tones of his offer of the loan of any of his horses. To this she replied promptly that she preferred a military mount as more trustworthy, an answer which bred great, if somewhat causeless, elation in the minds of some of the young officers who heard it.

The scene of the picnic was a spur of the mountains some dozen miles to the eastward, where there were curious caves to be seen, and also the ruins of an ancient fortress, among which it was sometimes possible, after careful search, to unearth fragments, or even whole specimens, of old glazed tiles, very highly prized by those learned in such things. On this occasion everything was done in the orthodox way. The caves were duly explored, and the ruins examined, with suitable precautions against finding scorpions instead of tiles, and a number of rather disappointing sherds were discovered, and entrusted to the servants to take home. Mabel and Flora Graham chose to climb to the highest point of the ruins, with the assistance of all the younger men of the party, and when there confessed that but for being able to say they had achieved the ascent, they had gained nothing that was not equally obtainable down below. However, the provisions were excellent, and nothing material to their consumption had been

forgotten, so that all agreed it had been a most successful picnic, and Georgia heaved a sigh of satisfaction as she watched the servants put the last of the empty baskets back into the carts.

These carts, with the three or four carriages which had conveyed the elder members of the party, were obliged to return home by the road across the plain, but the riders were able to take a short cut through the hills for the first part of the way. While a discussion was going on as to the most interesting path to choose, Flora Graham moved close to Mabel.

"Oh, Mab," she said hastily, "do you think you could get Mr. Brendon to ride with you? He will stick to me, and I know Fred won't like it when he hears. He's a little inclined to be jealous, you know; because once, before we were engaged, he thought I liked Mr. Brendon. Besides, I want to ride with Mr. Milton, and talk to him about Fred."

Milton, the youth who was Fred Haycraft's companion at Fort Shah Nawaz, had cheerfully put up with the fag-end of the holidays that his senior might enjoy as much of Miss Graham's society as possible. He was delighted with the proposed arrangement, and Mabel had little difficulty in attracting Mr. Brendon to her side when he found that the post he coveted was already bespoken. It was obvious, however, to the rest of the party that Mr. Burgrave and Fitz Anstruther had both been promising themselves the honour of escorting Mabel, and the sudden blankness of their faces when they found themselves forestalled by a third person was highly instructive. Either moved by a certain vague fellow-feeling, or each inflamed with the determination to see that the other played fair, they fell in together behind Mabel and her cavalier, riding rather in advance of the rest.

As for Mabel, she felt it distinctly hard to be obliged to sacrifice herself for Flora's benefit. Mr. Brendon, of the Public Works Department, was a most estimable young man, but he laboured under the drawback of possessing a plethora of useful knowledge. To ask him a question was like pulling the string of a shower-bath, which let loose a flood of information on the head of the unwary questioner. Mabel had intended to let him prose as he liked, while she thought about other things, and jerked the string, so to speak, at intervals, but he was far too polite to monopolise the conversation. He paused for her replies or invited her opinion so often, while clearly ready to supply the needed answer himself, that her plan failed altogether of success, and she found him almost unendurable. She had just succeeded in hiding an irrepressible yawn when a happy idea came to her as she was approaching desperation.

"Oh, here is quite a nice level piece of ground. Let us race, Mr. Brendon."

He could not well refuse, and for all too short a time Roy pounded gallantly through the sand. Brendon's lighter steed won easily, and when Mabel reached the end of the course, she found him waiting for

her. Their road passed at this point through a narrow ravine, leading down to the open desert, and the high rocks on either side looked black and threatening against the glowing sunset sky, a glimpse of which at the further end of the gorge dazzled the eyes.

"I think you had better let me pilot you here, Miss North," said Brendon. "The ground is strewn with loose boulders, and it is difficult to distinguish them in this light. You might get a nasty fall."

It was well that Brendon should ride anywhere rather than beside her, and Mabel accepted the position he assigned her with something more than resignation. He took the lead as they entered the ravine, his pony picking its way with infinite daintiness, and Roy followed securely enough.

"What a delightful Dürer engraving we should make!" exclaimed Mabel suddenly, "creeping along between these dark cliffs under such a gorgeous red sky. But it's contrary to all symbolism that you should be riding first."

"The colour of the sky would scarcely tell in an engraving," answered Brendon, with a perceptible accent of reproof. "But the idea would work out well in black and white."

"Oh dear, no!" persisted Mabel. "The sky is everything. It gives such a threatening touch. I feel quite weird myself, don't——"

"Don't you?" she was going to say, but the words were cut short, for a shot was fired among the rocks on the left, close beside her. Roy, accustomed to such sounds, started slightly and pricked up his ears, but the pony shied violently, and received a cut from its rider.

"Abominable carelessness!" shouted Brendon to Mabel, looking round as the animal dashed forward. "I'm coming back to hunt that fellow out. He might have shot one of us."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the pony reared suddenly and then fell forward, throwing him over its head. At the same moment Mabel heard the sound of another horse's feet behind her, and before she could look round a hand dealt Roy a smart blow on the flank. She felt him rise for a leap, and was conscious that his heels touched something as he went over. It seemed a miracle that he did not land upon his head, but as it was, the shock, when his hoofs clattered down amongst the stones, nearly unseated Mabel, and before she could collect her scattered senses three mounted men advanced, as if by magic, from among the rocks on either hand. Before she had time to do more than realise that they wore turbans, a fourth man made his appearance from behind, and seizing her bridle, forced Roy into a canter. She had a momentary vision of Brendon, his face streaming with blood, flinging himself between her horse and her captor's, and trying to wrest the bridle from him; she saw the sweep of steel in the red light as one of the other men turned round; saw Brendon cut down by a murderous blow from a tulwar. It was all over in a moment; and before she could even scream, she and her captors were out of the gorge and riding swiftly to the right, away



from Alibad and safety. From the fatal spot they had left there came faintly to her ears the sound of several shots.

The sound reached other ears besides Mabel's. Mr. Burgrave and Fitz, riding leisurely, as they had been when Mabel and her cavalier left them behind in their race, started when they heard it, and put spurs to their horses. Entering the gorge they could see nothing but dark rocks and lurid sky. No! What was that?—a bright flash, followed by another report, coming from a spot close to the ground at the further end. Riding headlong down the ravine, regardless of the shifting boulders, they distinguished at last the form of Brendon, his light clothes dyed with blood. He was dragging himself painfully towards them, holding his discharged revolver in his left hand.

"They've got Miss North!" he gasped, as they neared him.

With a sharp exclamation Mr. Burgrave dug his spurs deeper and dashed on, but Fitz, catching the look of agony on Brendon's face, drew rein for a moment.

"She's riding—a troop-horse. Yell to him—to 'Halt!'" came in broken sentences. "And look out. There's a—rope."

Even as he sank down exhausted from loss of blood, there was a crash in front. The Commissioner and his horse had gone down in a heap, marking only too accurately the position of the rope. Fitz galloped forward, his pony taking the obstacle like a bird.

"Ride on, for Heaven's sake! Never mind me!" came in a despairing shout from the man who lay helpless under the struggling horse, and Fitz obeyed. He was out of the gorge now, and could see far away to the right the dark moving mass which represented the object of his pursuit. Ramming in his spurs, he followed at breakneck speed, his whole soul absorbed in the savage determination to catch up the robbers and their prey. Whether he and Sheikh lived or died, they must reach that goal. Thundering on, his eyes fixed upon his quarry, he perceived presently, with a fierce joy, that it was becoming clearer to his view. He was gaining! Now he could distinguish the forms of the men and their horses, and presently he was able to assure himself that the wiry little native steeds were undoubtedly handicapped by the necessity of accommodating their pace to that of the heavier Roy. That the robbers he was pursuing were four to one did not occur to Fitz, even in face of the ominous fact that they made no attempt to interfere with him, too confident in their superior numbers to take the trouble to separate and cut him off. The moment that he felt sure of his advantage, his plan was ready formed, complete in his mind, and without any volition of his own, his revolver was in his hand, cocked, the moment after. As he diminished the distance between himself and the robbers, he saw that they were no longer in a compact body. The three unencumbered riders were leading, and Mabel and the man who held her bridle came after. Mabel had recovered her presence of mind by this time. She was striking furiously with her whip at the hand which gripped her rein, in the hope of forcing the robber to loose

his hold, but in vain. He could not spare a hand to snatch away the whip, but his grasp upon the bridle never relaxed. Suddenly a voice sounded in her ears. Standing in his stirrups, Fitz put all the power of his lungs into the one word "Halt!" and at the well-known shout Roy stopped dead, his feet firmly planted together. The shock dragged the robber from his saddle, and his own horse, terrified, continued its headlong career. Still grasping Mabel's bridle with his left hand, he drew his tulwar and sprang at Fitz. A bullet from the ready revolver met him as he came, and he fell forward, the tulwar dropping harmless from his fingers, which clutched for a moment convulsively at the sand under Sheikh's hoofs.

"Quick! Get behind me! Crouch between the horses!" cried Fitz to Mabel, urging the panting Sheikh in front of Roy. The three men in front had faced round, and seemed to be meditating a charge, but they were without firearms, and Fitz, standing behind his pony, had them covered if they should approach. Left to themselves, they might have distracted his attention by coming at him from different directions, and taken him in the rear, but the other members of the party had now emerged from the gorge, and were riding down on them with shouts. Prudent counsels prevailed, and they turned their horses' heads again, and rode off into the gathering darkness, leaving the victorious Fitz with two trembling, sweating horses, and Mabel, crouched on the sand, clutching wildly at his feet. She tried to speak, as she looked up at him, but no words would come, and only a hoarse scream issued from her lips. The sight of her utter prostration almost unmanned him.

"Don't, don't, Miss North!" he entreated, trying to lift her up. "You're safe now, and the others will be here in a minute. Don't let them see you like this."

She swayed to and fro as he raised her, and staggering to Roy's side, buried her face in his mane. Fitz turned away. It would be taking an unfair advantage, he felt, to look at her in this forlorn state, and he began to pat Sheikh, and praise his gallant efforts in a low tone. Many a time afterwards did he curse himself as a fool for this backwardness of his, but at the moment it was impossible for him to take her in his arms and comfort her, as his heart urged him to do. She had been saved from death or worse by his means, and he could not presume upon the service he had rendered her.

The moment of constraint was quickly ended by the eager questions of the men who came galloping up. Fitz stepped forward to meet them.

"Look out!" he said quickly, jerking his head in Mabel's direction, "Miss North is awfully knocked up. Leave her to herself for a moment. Is Tighe here?"

"He stopped at the nullah. It's a bad job there. Brendon's gone, poor old chap! and the Commissioner's pretty extensively damaged. Jolly good job the doctor was able to ride out this afternoon."

"I say, look here," said Fitz, "we mustn't let her know about this. Can't we get her straight home?"

"Must go back to the nullah. The Colonel and one or two more whose horses were no good stayed with Tighe to help him dig out the Commissioner. He had managed to shoot his horse, lest it should kick his brains out, but it was lying right across him. They'll want help in getting him home, and poor Brendon too."

"Well, say nothing to Miss North, and we'll try to keep it dark. There, she's coming. Can't you say something ordinary?"

Milton, to whom the request—or rather command—was addressed, gasped helplessly. The circumstances seemed to prevent his saying anything at all, but as Mabel came towards them, her face still white and her lips trembling, a happy thought seized two of the other men simultaneously.

"We've never even looked at the rascal you potted!" they cried to Fitz. "Here, come along. Who's got a match?"

Mabel shuddered, and caught at Fitz's arm, but a dreadful fascination seemed to draw her to the place where the dead robber lay. Some one produced a box of matches, and kneeling down, struck a light close to the face of the corpse. Fitz knew as well as Mabel what face she expected to see, and he could scarcely keep himself from echoing her cry of surprise and relief when they realised that a stranger lay before them.

"Wait a minute, though," said one of the officers, pressing forward. "Lend us another match, old man. Yes, I thought so! It's Mumtaz Mohammed, the sower who deserted five or six weeks back."

"Then it was only a common or garden raid, and not a planned thing," said another. "I know it was said he had got away to those fellows who broke out of prison at Kharrakpur."

"No," said Mabel suddenly. "It was a plot."

"Why, Miss North—how do you know?" they asked, astonished.

"Because my syce was in it. He told me this morning my pony could not be ridden, and wanted me to send for Laili, whom Mr. Anstruther is training for me. She bolts at the sound of a shot. It was a shot fired in the nullah that began this—this——"

"And you didn't ride Laili, after all?"

"No, I would ride Roy. I asked for him just to see what Dick would say, and when he didn't want me to have him, I persisted, simply to tease him. And it has saved my life!" she cried hysterically.

"Not much doubt who stood to benefit by the plot!" muttered some one, but Fitz nudged the speaker fiercely.

"I don't know what we're all standing here for—in case our deceased friend's sorrowing relations like to come back and wipe us out, I suppose. Let me mount you, Miss North. Are you fellows going to stop out all night? Had we better bring *that* along, do you think?"

This was added in a lower tone, as he pointed to the robber's corpse. After some demur, it was decided to lay it across the saddle of Brendon's pony, which had found its way again to the rest with a pair of broken knees, and they rode back towards the gorge, the last man leading the laden pony, so that it might be kept out of Mabel's sight. As they approached the entrance to the ravine, Dr. Tighe came forward hastily to meet them.

"Look here," he said, "I want some one to ride on to Alibad at once. The Commissioner has broken his knee-cap and a few other things, and Major North's is the nearest house, but Mrs. North mustn't be frightened. Milton, your pony's a good one, I know, so just take it out of him. Say nothing about Miss North or Brendon or anything, but tell Mrs. North the Commissioner has had a nasty fall, and I am bringing him to her house with a fractured patella and a pair of smashed ribs. She can get things ready, and send on to my house for anything she doesn't happen to have."

"Surely the ladies had better go back with me, doctor?" asked Milton, pausing as he was about to start.

"No, we don't want any more kidnapping to-night. We must travel slowly, all of us, but they'll be safer than with you. Feel shaky, Miss North? Drink this," and he handed her a flask-cup. "Miss Graham is waiting to weep tears of joy over you. What, aren't you gone, Milton?"

"Tell Major North to arrest the syce," Fitz shouted after the messenger as he disappeared in the darkness.

"Off with your coats, you young fellows," cried Dr. Tighe, as the sound of the pony's steps died away. "The Commissioner has to be carried home somehow, and there's not so much as a stick to make a stretcher of. We must tie the coats together by the sleeves, and manufacture a litter in that way."

No one dared to scoff, although there were few believers in the doctor's scheme, but working energetically under his directions, they succeeded in framing a sufficiently practicable litter. Six of the party were chosen as bearers, and the others were to relieve them, their duty in the meantime being to lead the riderless horses, and keep watch against a surprise. Mabel and Flora, who had been enjoying the luxury of shedding a few tears together in private, were placed at the head of the procession, and the march began. At first the litter containing the wounded man followed close after the two girls, but presently Fitz, who was one of the bearers, felt his arm grasped.

"Let the ladies get ahead of us, please. I—I can't stand this very well."

Fitz understood. Mr. Burgrave was suffering acutely as he was carried over the rough ground, and he feared lest some sound extorted from him by the pain should acquaint Mabel with the fact. The litter and its bearers dropped behind, and if now and then a groan was forced from the Commissioner's lips, his rival, at any rate, felt no contempt

for this reluctant weakness. Before half of the journey had been accomplished, a relief party, headed by Dick, met them, and Mr. Burgrave was transferred to a charpoy carried by natives, after Dr. Tighe had made rough and ready use of the splints and strapping Georgia had sent. A little later, a detachment of the Khemistan Horse passed at a smart trot in the direction of the gorge. It was not now the rule, as in the early days of General Keeling's reign, for the regiment to sleep in its boots, but it was still supposed to be ready night and day to trace the perpetrators of any outrage and bring them to justice—rough justice, sometimes, but none the less impressive for that. The sight gave Mabel a sense of safety and comfort, and she scouted Flora's proposal that she should come home with her for the night.

"As if I would leave Georgie to do all this extra work alone!" she said, as they turned in at the gate.

"Oh, Mab, is it true about the Commissioner?" cried Georgia, coming out to meet them on the verandah.

"Yes; I'm afraid he's dreadfully hurt, poor man!"

"Was he riding with you when he fell?"

"He—he was riding after me," said Mabel cautiously.

Georgia threw up her hands. "Oh, if you could only have hurt any other man, or taken him to any house but this!" she cried; and Mabel thought it both unkind and unfair, considering the circumstances.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

HARK! what was that? Mabel sprang up in bed, her heart beating furiously, her hands clammy with fear. The sound of horses' feet, the rattling of bridles, on every side! A wild impulse seized her to creep under the dressing-table—to hide herself anywhere, but in a moment she laughed, remembering that the last thing before going to bed, Dick had told her for her comfort that not only would the usual Sikh sentry keep guard over the Commissioner's slumbers, but that the compound would be patrolled all night by the Khemistan Horse. She crept to the window, and peered out between the slats of the venetians. Yes, there they were—splendid men with huge turbans, and weapons glittering in the moonlight—pacing slowly to and fro upon their stout little horses. But how was it that there were two of them at that far corner of the compound, where she could scarcely distinguish their figures, and why had they paused as though to listen for something? Mabel listened too, and presently, above the nearer noises of trampling hoofs and jingling bits, she heard the tread of a galloping horse. Was it a scout coming in to give warning of a threatened attack? But no, the two men at the corner sat motionless on their horses, and as the sound came nearer and nearer,

she saw the flash of their swords. They were saluting—whom or what? Mabel strained her eyes to see, but could distinguish nothing. Then she remembered. It was General Keeling to whom they were doing honour, as he rode his nightly rounds, watchful for the safety of his old province. A cold sweat broke out all over her, and in a panic, of which she was heartily ashamed even at the moment, she scurried back to bed, and gave herself up to recurring paroxysms of horror. Of what use were sentinels against such a visitant as this? Suppose he chose to come closer, up to the house, to enter? What was more likely? She lifted her head for a moment and listened again. Surely that was a horse's tread upon the drive, coming up to the door? In reality, it was only one of the patrol, but in Mabel's condition of ungovernable terror this did not occur to her, and she buried her head under the bed-clothes, and screamed.

Her ayah, roused from her heavy slumbers by her mistress's shrieks, came shivering to her side and tried to quiet her, but finding her entreaties of no avail, ran for help. Presently Georgia glided in, looking like a reproachful ghost herself, in a white dressing-gown, and proffered Mabel three tabloids and a glass of water, as sternly as if she had been Queen Eleanor handing Rosamund the poison.

"I'll sit by you till you are asleep," she whispered, "but you mustn't make such a noise. You'll wake the Commissioner, and he has only just dropped off to sleep, poor man!"

"I know I'm a fearful baby," confessed Mabel, restored to sanity by the eminently practical nature of Georgia's benevolence, "but I was so horribly frightened. Is poor Mr. Burgrave very bad?"

"It was a nasty accident," replied Georgia, with professional caution.

"What have you done to him?"

"Strapped up the broken ribs, and applied ice to the leg and slung it up."

"Ugh, cruel creature! ice this cold night? I suppose it's because you hate him so much."

"Hate him? What nonsense! How could we hate a man who has got hurt in trying to save you? He's so brave about it, too."

"And he didn't mind having you for a doctor?"

"Of course I was only helping Dr. Tighe. But even if Mr. Burgrave disliked my being there, he wouldn't show it. When Dr. Tighe told him he had better stay in this house until the splint is taken off, and not run the risk of jarring the limb, he looked at me, and said, 'If my presence is not too troublesome to my kind surgeon here.'"

"And smiled at you like a father. I know," said Mabel, with sleepy sarcasm. "Georgie," she roused herself suddenly, "I want to know—how is——"

"Now I will not answer another question to-night," said Georgia resolutely. "I am going to read to you till you go to sleep."

When Mabel awoke in the morning she felt like one oppressed by



an intolerable burden. Body and mind seemed to be alike tired out, and it was an effort even to open her eyes. Georgia and Dr. Tighe were in the room, looking at her, and the sight of them reminded her that there was something she wanted to ask, but she could not remember what it was.

"Well, Miss North," said Dr. Tighe, "nerves a bit jumpy this morning, eh? We'll allow you a day in bed to settle them a little, but after that you must get up and help Mrs. North to look after her patient."

"Oh, I'll get up to-day," said Mabel faintly.

"No, no; don't be in too great a hurry. Your brother will come in to ask you a question or two in a few minutes, and afterwards you shall try what a little more sleep and a little more slumber will do for you. It's quite evident that nature never meant you for a frontiers-woman."

"Oh, doctor," expostulated Georgia, "think what she has gone through since she came here, and only out from home such a short time! Besides, nothing so bad as the affair of yesterday has ever happened in this neighbourhood before."

"At any rate, it's the sort of thing you want to take to young if you're to shine in it," said the doctor. "Life in these parts is not exactly pretty, but it has its exciting moments. Nothing like what it was once, though. My predecessor under General Keeling used to head cavalry charges and take forts in the intervals of his medical duties. I have no pleasant little recreations of that sort for my leisure hours. Now, Miss North, don't you dare to laugh at the thought of my heading a cavalry charge. There was some object in training in those days, but naturally one puts on weight when there is nothing to do but potter about a hospital."

"You see you're not the only person in the world who hankers after thrilling experiences, Mab," said Georgia, as she left the room with the doctor, and the words recalled to Mabel their conversation of three weeks since. Stretching out her hand, she took a mirror from the toilet-table and glanced at herself in it, only to drop the glass in horror. What a hollow-eyed wreck she looked! Was it possible that one day could work such a change? She had had her wish and seen realities, and she recoiled from the sight.

"On the whole, I think I prefer the pleasing fictions of ordinary English life," she said to herself.

"Good-morning, Mab," said Dick's voice. "I'm not going to disturb you long, but I want you to tell the doctor and me what you can remember about last night's business. It's necessary for me to know, or I wouldn't bother you."

With a shudder Mabel let her thoughts return to that homeward ride for a moment, then looked up suddenly. "Oh, now I remember," she said. "My head is so stupid, I couldn't think of it before. How is Mr. Brendon?"

Both men had expected her to ask after the Commissioner, and Brendon's name took them by surprise. "Brendon? Oh, he's—he's all right," said Dr. Tighe hastily, recovering himself first.

"But how could he be all right? His arm must have been nearly cut off. He fell down under the horses' feet. Oh, you don't mean—he can't be——"

The silence was a sufficient answer, and she let her head fall back on the pillow with a moan. Brendon dead—for whom her kindest feeling the evening before had been a more or less good-natured contempt—and he had practically given his life for her!

"Look here, Mab," said Dick earnestly, "it won't do the poor fellow any good to cry over him just now. What we want is evidence to convict the villains who did it."

"Have you caught them?" came in a muffled voice from the bed.

"I hope so. Winlock, who went out to track them last night, had his own ideas on the subject, and posted part of his detachment in hiding among the rocks round Dera Gul. A little before dawn three men rode up, coming from Nalapur way—not from our direction—but they and their horses were all dead-beat. Winlock arrested them, feeling pretty certain that they were the men he wanted, and had made a long round before turning homewards to avert suspicion. They were Bahram Khan's servants, sure enough, but he said they had been to Nalapur for him, and he offered no objection to their being arrested. When you are better, we must see if you can identify any of them, but now all I want is to know roughly what happened, on account of the—inquiry, which must take place to-day."

Thus encouraged, Mabel told her tale, helped out by questions from Dick, but breaking down more than once. He took down what she said, and the doctor signed it as a witness, and then they left her to Georgia's ministrations. Georgia found her patient excited and tearful, and sent Rahah at once to the surgery to make up a composing draught.

"Now, Mab, lie down and try to be quiet," she said.

"No, I won't lie down. I can't sleep," cried Mabel. "Isn't it dreadful, my having to identify those men? I can't bear to think of it, and it brings it all back so vividly—the horrible helplessness—I could do nothing—*nothing*—to save myself. I think I should have gone mad in another moment if Mr. Anstruther had not come up. And now to have to go and look at them in cold blood, and say that I know them again! Isn't there any way out of it? Oh, Georgie, can't Dick make my syce turn Queen's evidence?"

"I'm afraid not," said Georgia reluctantly. "The fact is, Mab, your syce didn't wait to be arrested. He went off while we were at the picnic."

"Oh, well," said Mabel despairingly, "then I must do it, I suppose. It seems a kind of duty, as poor Mr. Brendon was killed in trying to save me, to have his murderers punished. But it's awful to think that

three men will be hanged just because I recognised them. They will be hanged, won't they?"

"I don't know, really. It is very dreadful, Mab, but there is one good thing about the whole affair. It may save the frontier. Both Dick and I think that Bahram Khan was so confident of Mr. Burggrave's support, that he ventured on this outrage, feeling sure that he would see him through. If these three men are proved to be his agents, it must open the Commissioner's eyes. He's an Englishman, and an honourable man, though dreadfully mistaken, and he can't go on favouring him after that. In fact, I'm sure he wouldn't want to."

"No. I don't think he would. And I suppose there is no question about it really? What do other people think?"

"None of the men here have a doubt that it was Bahram Khan's doing. As for the regiment, they are so indignant over the insult offered to Dick in attempting to carry off his sister, that they would like to raze Dera Gul to the ground forthwith."

"Oh, that's the light in which they look at it! They don't think of my feelings in the matter at all?"

"I'm afraid not. You and I are merely Dick's chattels in their eyes, you see."

"I may be, but you are not. My ayah Tara tells me all sorts of wonderful things about you, Georgie, which she picks up from the servants. Do you know that when you kiss Dick before he starts in the morning, they think you are setting a spell upon him to keep him safe all day, and bring him back to you all right at night?"

Georgia blushed like a girl. "That is really rather sweet," she said. "Rahah despises the people round here too much to tell me anything they say about us."

"Oh, Georgie!" cried Mabel, with sudden envy, "I wish I cared for any one as you do for Dick! You look quite different when you talk about him. If only I wasn't such a cold-hearted wretch! I wish I had cared for poor Mr. Brendon, even; that would be better than caring for no one but myself."

She broke into a storm of tearless sobs, and Georgia hailed the appearance of Rahah with the sleeping draught, which she had to administer almost by force. It was some time in taking effect, but at last the sobs died away, and she was able to leave the patient in charge of her own ayah, while she went about her other duties. Not until the morning of the next day did Mabel wake again, very much ashamed of her behaviour, which she was conscious had not been exactly in accordance with the high aspirations she had confided to Georgia. Resolved to redeem her character, she sprang out of bed at once, and when Georgia came into her room on tiptoe, expecting to find her asleep, she was already dressed.

"Let me do something to help you," she said eagerly. "You must have had a fearful amount of extra work thrown on you yesterday. What can I do?"

"Well, if you are so benevolently inclined, you might sit with the Commissioner a little," said Georgia. "He was asking for you all day, and rather suspected us of concealing something dreadful from him."

"Very well," said Mabel readily. The proposal fell in delightfully with her wishes, for she had conceived a magnificent idea while dressing. By her diplomacy she would induce the Commissioner to reverse his frontier policy.

"Miss North!" Mr. Burgrave started up from his pillows as Mabel entered the sick-room, but becoming suddenly conscious of his injuries, sank back again stiffly. "Excuse my left hand," he added. "The other is off work just now. And how are you? Really not much the worse?"

"I had no business to be any the worse," returned Mabel. "Nothing happened to me, thanks to you and—the others."

"Ah, but the shock to the nerves must have been exceedingly severe," said Mr. Burgrave soothingly. "As I remarked to Tighe yesterday, Mrs. North would have got over anything of the kind in an hour or two, but you are much more highly strung."

Mabel was vaguely aware that the comparison was intended to be all in her favour, but she could not agree that the advantage was on her side, and she changed the subject hastily. "I don't know how to thank you for what you did. Every time I think of that evening I feel more and more how grateful I ought to be. And I am, indeed, but I can't say what I should like."

Mr. Burgrave raised his hand. "Please don't, Miss North, or you will make me more miserable than I am already. How can I forget that I did nothing to help you? Mr. Anstruther had that happiness, while I was lying on the ground under my horse."

"But you tried—you did all you could—you were so terribly hurt," protested Mabel.

"Yes, and that is my only comfort. I was hurt, and therefore I am here. No, on second thoughts, I don't even envy Anstruther. He did the work, but I have basely annexed the reward. To have rescued you was enough for him. I, who was unsuccessful, am consoled by finding myself under the same roof with you for a fortnight. That is enough for me."

"How nice of you to say so!" Mabel rose. "Then I can leave you quite happily, and go and help Georgia?"

"Miss North, you are not going already? What have I said to drive you out of the room? Do you want me to pine away in melancholy madness? After all, I did try to rescue you, as you were kind enough to say just now, but it will need your constant society and conversation to keep me from brooding over my failure."

"I'm afraid my society won't be very cheerful," said Mabel, resuming her seat with a sigh. "You see, I can't help feeling that what happened was a good deal my fault. If I had only told what I knew——"

"Well?" asked Mr. Burgrave anxiously as she paused.

"Ah, but if I had, you would not have believed it," was the unexpected response, "any more than you would now."

"Do you think I should be so rude as to question your word, Miss North?"

"You will when I tell you I know that the men who tried to carry me off were agents of Bahram Khan's."

"You have evidence to support this very serious allegation, I presume? Are you able to identify the men?"

"I suppose so; I haven't tried. But, Mr. Burgrave, I'm going to tell you something that only my sister-in-law knows—not even my brother, for I wouldn't let her say anything to him. Bahram Khan did want to—to marry me."

"What?" cried the Commissioner, starting up again; "you don't mean to say that he has ever ventured to—to suggest such a thing to you?" Rage and disgust strove for the mastery in his voice.

"Oh no; he has never said anything to me, but the day I was at Dera Gul the women talked of nothing else."

"Oh, the women!" Mr. Burgrave spoke quite calmly again, and with evident relief. "You must remember that Bahram Khan is a good deal more advanced in his notions than the other chiefs of the province, and would like to imitate our ways with regard to ladies—English ladies, I mean. That is just the sort of thing that native women can't understand. Any polite attention he might offer you would be misconstrued by them into a cause for violent jealousy. Their mistake made things extremely unpleasant for you at the moment, no doubt, but you need not torment yourself with thinking that he had any such preposterous idea in his head."

Mr. Burgrave did not actually say that a lady accustomed to universal admiration was liable to perceive it even where it did not exist, but this was what Mabel understood his slightly repressive tone to imply, and she grew crimson.

"Why don't you say that I imagined the whole thing?" she demanded. "It's not an experience I am proud of, I assure you. I told it you purely in the hope that it might open your eyes a little, but since you prefer to regard Bahram Khan as an interesting martyr——"

"Pray don't mistake me, Miss North. If I believed that Bahram Khan had devised this dastardly plot against you, I would hunt him down like a bloodhound until he was delivered up to justice, though that would mean the death of all my hopes for this frontier. In one way, of course, it would simplify matters a good deal. I am not in the habit of bothering ladies with politics, but there can be no harm in saying that it gives me great pain to differ from a man I respect as I do your brother. He has done so much for the frontier that it seems almost presumption in me to set my opinion above his. However, I have formed that opinion after long and careful study

of the Khemistan problem, and only the very strongest proof that I had been mistaken could induce me to alter it. But if you should identify Bahram Khan's servants as your assailants, it would be conclusive evidence that he is not the man I take him to be."

"And then you would see that Dick was right, and leave him to manage things in his own way?"

"My dear Miss North, we are now soaring into the domain of improbabilities. If my opinion were once modified, it is possible that your brother's view might prevail, or again, it might not."

"I am certain he would not be sorry if Bahram Khan was proved untrustworthy," was Mabel's mental comment. "It would show him a way out of his difficulty. And now I shall be able to do it."

Mabel was particularly cheerful all the rest of the day, as indeed she had a right to be, for had she not just secured the safety of the frontier? Warned by her experience of the morning, she made no further attempt to entrap Mr. Burgrave into a political discussion, but contented herself with showing in numberless little ways her gratitude for the concession he was prepared to make. She even welcomed his offer to introduce her to the beauties of Browning, a poet whose works she had been wont to regard with the mingled alarm and dislike which, in the case of a modern young lady, can only spring from ignorance of them. He sent a servant back to the bungalow he had occupied to fetch the two portly volumes which, as he told her, always formed a part of his travelling library, and she read aloud to him without a murmur a considerable portion of "Paracelsus." Under the combined influence of the poetry he liked best and the reader's voice, the Commissioner forgot alike his injuries and the difficulties which beset his policy, and the household fairly basked in his smiles. This, at least, was what Fitz Anstruther said, but he had happened to intrude upon the reading, and was adversely affected by the peaceful scene.

The next morning, as Dick was going to his office, Mabel intercepted him in the verandah. "I am ready to identify those men as soon as you like, Dick," she said.

He looked at her in surprise. "Wouldn't you rather wait until you have recovered a little from the shock?" he asked.

"Oh no, I'm all right now. I should like to get it over, Dick."

"Well, you certainly seem to have picked up wonderfully. I suppose there's no doubt of your knowing them again?"

Mabel shuddered. "How could I help recognising them? The red light, and those awful faces—it seems as if the whole thing was photographed on my mind. I should know them anywhere."

"Oh, all right. It would be far worse, you know, to try to identify them and fail than to let the thing go altogether."

"You needn't be afraid. Only I should be glad not to have to look forward to it much longer."

"Very well. No doubt it's better to do it before the impression has



a chance of fading from your mind. It's a bother about the Commissioner, though. He insists on being present, and Georgie and Tighe say he mustn't on any account be allowed to move until they have wired his knee. We shall have to carry his bed out on the verandah, I suppose. Just like him to think the show can't go on without him. Of course he's afraid we shall contrive to bring his precious *protégé* in guilty in some underhand way."

Mabel smiled as Dick went down the steps, for she knew better than he did. Mr. Burgrave's anxiety was not so much for Bahram Khan personally as for his own schemes, and not so much for them as for the continuance of his friendship with the North family. This knowledge, and the pleasing conviction that she alone possessed it, sustained her when she was summoned in the afternoon to identify her three surviving assailants.

"Come along," said Dick, entering the drawing-room; "they're all here, and Tighe has superintended the removal of the distinguished patient. They're in the verandah outside his room. Don't be frightened, Mab. Georgia shall come too and support you."

In spite of her resolution, Mabel trembled a little as she entered the improvised police-court, realising once more what issues hung upon her words. Fitz was there, and a Hindu clerk, and the Commissioner, propped up in bed. Before them stood a dozen natives with turbans and clothes of various degrees of picturesque dirt and raggedness, guarded by as many dismounted troopers armed to the teeth.

"Now, Mab, pick 'em out," murmured Dick, from behind his sister.

"But there are too many men here. There were only three," objected Mabel, in a hasty whisper.

"Well, and you have to tell us which they were. You didn't think we were going to show you the three prisoners and invite you to swear to them, did you? Now don't waste the time of the court."

Absolute despair seized upon Mabel as she walked down the line of men, and looked shrinkingly into their faces. How was it possible that so many natives, differing presumably in origin and circumstances, could be so much alike? Not one of them blenched under her timid scrutiny. Some looked stolid and some bored, and one or two even amused, but this gave her no help. At last, however, it struck her that there was something familiar in one or two of the faces. She returned and examined them more carefully, and then looked round at Dick and the rest.

"This man," she said, pointing to one, "and that one, and this."

"You are certain?" asked Mr. Burgrave.

"Yes; I know their faces quite well."

This time an undisguised smile ran momentarily along the line of swarthy countenances, only to disappear before Dick's frown.

"Take them away," he said to the troopers, and with a clanking of chains here and there, the prisoners and their guard departed.

"What is the matter?" asked Mabel in bewilderment, as she looked from one to the other of the three chagrined faces before her.

"Oh, only that you have identified as your assailants one of the *chaprasis* and a sowar in mufti and the gardener's son, who were all peacefully going about their lawful business at the time of the outrage," said Dick bitterly. "You have made us the laughing-stock of the frontier."

"But—but weren't the real men there?"

"Of course they were, but you passed them over."

"And what will happen to them now?"

"They'll be discharged for lack of evidence, that's all. Bahram Khan will testify that they had been to Nalapur on an errand for him, and other witnesses will swear that they saw and spoke to them there, and we can say nothing."

(*To be continued.*)

## SOME LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF LAKELAND

WHEN poets take to the writing of guide-books about a place, one may be sure that the place is worth seeing and worth reading about. Carlyle, who had scant respect for poets, once declared that Scott had written a rhyming guide to the Scottish Lakes. A cynical person might no doubt say that Wordsworth has done the same thing for the English Lakes. "Did you ever hear me preach?" asked Coleridge of Charles Lamb. "I never heard you do anything else," was Elia's answer. Those who do not care for Wordsworth's verse have been known to say that he never did anything else but write guide-books. However that may be, he certainly wrote one guide-book, and in good honest prose too. He called it a "Guide through the District of the Lakes in the North of England," and actually confessed himself as furnishing a description of the scenery "for the use of tourists and residents." It must have been quite a shock to Mr. Ruskin to find that Wordsworth had made such a concession to the modern spirit. But Wordsworth detested the railway train as much as the sage of Brantwood, and although he wrote for tourists, it is clear that he never thought of them getting into the very heart of Lakeland, as they can do now, by the aid of steam. Even Harriet Martineau, who was a "Laker," and like Wordsworth wrote a guide, could not imagine a time "when iron roads will intersect the mountainous parts of Westmoreland and Cumberland." But the dreaded time has come, and Mr. Ruskin himself lived to see the smoke of the engine from his windows as easily as he could see the pine-woods and the Old Man of Conistone. Fortunately, the spirit of Wordsworth is still dominant. Indeed, the literary visitor to the Lake country cannot fail to be struck with the way in which the name and memory of the poet pervade the district. It is close upon fifty years since he died, yet he lives as securely in the heart of Lakeland as Burns himself by the banks of the Doon. This is only as it should be. If Wordsworth had never made his home among the Lakes there would have been no "Lake school," so called, and Westmoreland might conceivably have been ignored by the tourist.

For Wordsworth was the first among the little group of "Lakers" to take up his residence in the now classic vale. Four years before he settled there—that is to say, in 1795—he and his sister Dorothy had rented a pretty little cottage near Crewkerne, Dorsetshire, in a beautiful and romantic country such as poets love; and in 1797 they had gone to Nether Stowey, to be near Coleridge. But Wordsworth's passion

for Nature was not satisfied at either of these places. He had still to find the "meet nurse" for his "poetic child," and he thought he could not do better than try the Lake country, with which he had already made some acquaintance as a boy at Hawkshead Grammar School. Nor was he mistaken. Even Scotland itself cannot show anything finer in the way of the picturesque than what may be seen in the district where the greatest of the "Lakers" made his home. From the gorge of Hammersear, the whole vale of Grasmere breaks upon the view in a style of "almost theatrical surprise." The lovely valley opens before the eye in the distance, the lake lying immediately below, with its big, solemn, ark-like island seemingly floating on the surface, and its exquisite outline on the opposite shore revealing all its tiny bays and sylvan margin, feathered to the edge with wild flowers and ferns. In one quarter a little wood, stretching for about half a mile towards the outlet of the lake; more directly in opposition to the spectator a few green fields, and beyond them, just two low shots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees, with a vast and apparently never-ending series of ascents, rising above it to the height of more than three thousand feet.

This was the cottage to which Wordsworth came with his sister in 1799. It is still there, pretty much as the poet left it; and having been purchased by the Wordsworth Society, who, with the help of Professor Knight, have made it a kind of show place, a multitude of visitors now pass through its rooms every year. It would be easy to write of it as it appears to-day, but one would rather know what it was like when the poet lived his happy life in it. The best description of it at that time is from De Quincey's pen. "It was," he says, "in its exterior not so much a picturesque cottage as it was lovely. One gable-end was indeed most gorgeously apparelled in ivy, and so far picturesque; but the principal side, or what may be called the front, as it presented itself to the road and was most illuminated by windows, was embowered—nay, it may be said smothered—in roses of different species, amongst which the moss and the damask prevailed. These, together with as much jasmine and honeysuckle as could find room to flourish, were not only in themselves a most interesting garniture for a humble cottage wall, but they also performed the acceptable service of breaking the unpleasant glare that would else have wounded the eye." Such was Dove Cottage, Grasmere. There the poet brought his young wife in 1802, and there most of his children were born. In 1809 he removed to Allan Bank, a house in the same district; and in 1813 he became tenant of Rydal Mount, still among his beloved lakes and hills, where he remained till his death in 1850. This last residence of the poet is a modest building of sober hue, mantled over here and there with roses and ivy and jessamine and Virginia creepers. Harriet Martineau speaks of the garden as "a true poet's garden," and recommends the tourist to "stand on the moss-grown eminence (like a little Roman camp) in front of the house, whence he may view the whole

valley of the Rothay," with Windermere in the distance. Mrs. Hemans, who in a state of trepidation once visited the poet here, describes the house as "a lovely cottage-like building." It stands near the romantic village of Rydal, about a mile to the north of Ambleside; and the whole district is strewn with reminiscences of the poet and his friends and other notables. Hartley Coleridge lived and died in Nab Cottage near by; the Knoll, not far off, was long the residence of Miss Martineau, and many an old Rugby boy remembers Fox Howe as the home of Dr. Arnold. Never surely has such a brilliant intellectual group given fame to a corner of country so secluded!

What the magnificent scenery did for Wordsworth and for his poetry it is hardly necessary to say. He spent some years at Cambridge, but the mountains were, after all, his true university. "Books," he remarks in one of his sonnets, "are a substantial world, both pure and good"; yet he does not seem to have been a great reader. His library was not large, and his way of treating books (he would cut the leaves open with the butter-knife!) made him in Southey's eyes nothing short of a monster. Southey had a library of fourteen thousand volumes, and De Quincey subsequently filled Dove Cottage almost from floor to ceiling with books. But Wordsworth's passion did not run to books; his passion, as he said himself, was *wandering*. Some visitor to Rydal Mount once asked to see the poet's study. "You can see his library where he keeps his books," was the reply, "but his study is out of doors." And so it was. No writer, not even Scott himself, has mirrored with such fidelity the country of his choice as Wordsworth has mirrored the mountains and streams and valleys, the birds and flowers and woods of his own loved Lakeland; and he who would fully appreciate the one must not fail to explore the other.

Wordsworth lies in Grasmere Churchyard, with his wife and other members of his family by his side, and Hartley Coleridge not far away. It is a fitting resting-place for the poet of the region, lying under the shadow of the yews, beside the gushing Rothay, and encircled by the green hills. He chose it himself, and every one rejoices that he did. Inside Grasmere Church, of which Wordsworth has left so beautiful a description, there is a fine memorial tablet, with an inscription written by the author of "The Christian Year," and at Ambleside there is a Wordsworth chapel adjoining the church. In short, it is Wordsworth all around, just as in Edinburgh the fame of the Waverley Novels still prevails in many a name and many an old association.

With Wordsworth established at Grasmere, a new attraction to the Lake country presented itself to the friends and admirers of the young poet. De Quincey, then dallying with his studies at Oxford, was the first to make a sign. The story of his connection with Lakeland is interesting on several accounts. It arose in a somewhat roundabout way from the early fancy which he had conceived for the writings of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The "Lyrical Ballads," published in

1798, when De Quincey was only thirteen, had awakened in him quite a new poetical sense, and, as his biographer puts it, moved him "to seek to come into close personal communication with the authors of his pleasure." He had written to Wordsworth as early as 1803, and later had actually gone to Westmoreland with the purpose of calling upon him, though, as he remarks, "an overwhelming feeling of reverence and besetting shyness" made him turn back when he was within a short distance of the poet's door. Thus defeated by his own delicacy in making the acquaintance of one whose name was at this time but a byword and a sign to awaken scorn, De Quincey bethought himself of Coleridge. He had not seen the poet; he would conquer his diffidence, and make an effort to see the philosopher.

Coleridge was then at Bridgewater, and thither De Quincey betook himself. He had received directions for finding out the house where Coleridge was visiting, and in riding down the main street he noticed a gateway corresponding to the description. Under this was standing and gazing about him a man whom De Quincey, so he declares, at once recognised to be Coleridge from "the peculiar appearance of haze or dreaminess" which mixed with the light of his large, soft, expressive eyes. They had both begun to take opium by this time! It was some moments before De Quincey succeeded in rousing the philosopher from his reverie, but that once done "he received me with a kindness of manner so marked that it might be called gracious." It became a case of discipleship at once, though not with the results that some critics would have us believe. De Quincey has been commonly regarded as a derivative of Coleridge, whereas the characteristic part of him is not indebted either to Coleridge or to any of his contemporaries. No doubt as a thinker he was influenced by Coleridge; as Mr. Leslie Stephen has wittily phrased it, "he was the adjective of which Coleridge was the substantive." But De Quincey was hardly a great thinker. We do not remember him either for his powers of reasoning or for his services to philosophy; we remember him for his "purple patches" of prose and for his recorded feats of laudanum-drinking, and are content to let his philosophy slip.

The acquaintance with Coleridge had further important results which De Quincey could hardly have foreseen when he first met him at Bridgewater. It so happened that Coleridge had arranged to give a course of lectures in London, while his wife and children were under an invitation to Lakeland, where they were to stay with Southey. De Quincey offered himself as escort, and the little party set off for Grasmere in a postchaise. The account of the reception at the end of the journey is exceedingly interesting. The party landed at Wordsworth's, and De Quincey says that when he saw Dove Cottage again he was seized with something of the old panic, which did not leave him until he was involved in the bustle of helping Mrs. Coleridge and the children out of the carriage. "Never before or since," he confesses, "can I reproach myself with having trembled at the approach-



ing presence of any creature that is born of woman, excepting only for once or twice in my life, woman herself." He has very little to say about Wordsworth at this time—indeed his attention seems to have been directed mainly to the poet's wife and to his sister Dorothy; but he notes with enthusiasm the "quaint beauty and simplicity of the cottage, with its one little diamond-paned window, and its shrubberies and profusion of roses." At this time it would have been like one of his opium dreams to think that this same cottage would be his own abode for more than a quarter of a century.

On the third morning after their arrival he found the household prepared for an expedition across the mountains to Greta Hall, the residence of Southey. It seems to have staggered him to find a "common farmer's cart" at the door. He had never seen a vehicle of the kind used for such a purpose, but "what was good enough for the Wordsworths was good enough for me," and accordingly he set out in high spirits with the rest. The company parted at Ewesmere, the ladies continuing their journey in the "carriage," and Wordsworth and De Quincey walking on leisurely to Penrith. That evening the poet read to his young companion "The White Doe of Rylstone," an incident "ever memorable to me," as he says. Wordsworth, it may be remarked, was always reading his poetry to his friends. Nathaniel Parker Willis once asked John Wilson whether he ever repeated any other poetry but his own, and was answered: "Never in a single instance, to my knowledge. He is remarkable for the manner in which he is wrapped up in his own poetical life. He thinks of nothing else." In these early days De Quincey was too much of a hero-worshipper to object to this egotism, but the time came when he was not quite so willing to minister to Wordsworth's vanity. Meanwhile he landed at Southey's, remarked on the "very striking appearance" of that ponderous person, and presently returned to the south to sit again at the feet of Coleridge, to whom—the philosopher's finances being greatly embarrassed—he now made an anonymous gift of £300.

It was not until 1808 that De Quincey returned to Grasmere, and then it was practically to make a permanent settlement there. Wordsworth, as we have seen, had just left Dove Cottage, and De Quincey now took possession of it. Dorothy Wordsworth undertook to set it in order for him—for he was still unmarried—and we hear a great deal about curtains and carpets, and the best styles of furniture, and what not. She seems to have been a very practical person this sister of the poet. She sees good reason for preferring mahogany to deal for bookshelves in the consideration that "native woods are dear," and that in case De Quincey should leave the country and have a sale "no sort of wood sells so well at second-hand as mahogany." But it was not all *utile* with Dorothy. She speaks of the pleasure it was to her to go down to the old spot and "linger about as if we were again at home there"; and she thinks that even the little birds, her old companions, were glad that she had come back again.

De Quincey had gone south until the house should be ready, and when he returned he found himself the object of no little talk, "for most of the draperies belonging to beds, curtains, &c., had been sewed by the young women of that or the adjoining vales." And so the little Opium Eater entered on the occupation of the cottage which had been hallowed to his mind by the eight years' occupation of the "illustrious tenant" who preceded him. He has a glowing description of it in the "Confessions," part of which has already been quoted. This "cottage immortal in my remembrance," he says, "was the scene of struggles the most tempestuous and bitter within my own mind; this the scene of my despondency and unhappiness; this the scene of my happiness—a happiness which justified the faith of man's *earthly* lot as upon the whole a dowry from heaven." It was indeed an erratic life that was lived here, a strange and painful contrast to the placid existence of the poet who had written some of his best-known verse within the same walls. The first years were no doubt of some account on the formative side of De Quincey's genius; for such close communion as he enjoyed with Wordsworth and Coleridge and Southey and "Christopher North" could not be without its influence. But the craving for opium was always increasing, and when 1813 came it found De Quincey a slave to the terrible extent of eight thousand drops—about seven wine-glassfuls—of laudanum daily! Three years later he married the M—— of the "Confessions," a daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who serves so charmingly to complete his famous picture of a cottage interior. But still the baneful opium habit held him in its grip; and it was not until 1819, when pecuniary difficulties threatened to wreck him entirely, that he succeeded in freeing himself for a time. He set his mind to great literary schemes, but he had trifled with himself too long, and the ambitious enterprises had to be cast aside while he sought his bread from the editorship of a local paper at the magnificent salary of a guinea a week. He has himself dwelt sufficiently upon the sadness of the story, and there is no need to enlarge upon it here. The outwardly quiet Grasmere existence came to an end in 1830, when he removed to Edinburgh—"most un-Scottish of all the spirits who ever found refuge within its walls." There he lies to-day in a forlorn churchyard, his grave as sadly neglected as he had neglected his own opportunities.

I have spoken of "Christopher North" as one of the Lakers whose society De Quincey enjoyed while residing at Grasmere; and it is not unfitting that the two should be grouped together. They were very warm friends from first to last, and if Wilson had not established his *Blackwood* connection in Edinburgh it is doubtful if De Quincey would have gone there. I have often thought of the fine contrast of physiognomy and physique which these Lakers must have afforded when they were all brought together. De Quincey falls foul of Wordsworth's legs, declaring that they were "pointedly condemned by all female connoisseurs in legs"; but Wordsworth could

hardly have cut such a pitiable, shambling figure as the Opium Eater must have presented in the days of his bondage. At any rate beside him "Christopher North" must have seemed a veritable giant of stature and strength. Haydon, the historical painter, said that Wilson looked like "a fine Sandwich islander who had been educated in the Highlands," a statement which may be taken as a set-off to the idealisation of the Raeburn portrait. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, was very anxious to meet him after reading his "Isle of Palms," but "glorious Christopher" was then quite unknown in Edinburgh, and Hogg's inquiries only brought out that he was "a man from the mountains of Wales or the West of England, with hair like eagle's feathers and nails like bird's claws, a red beard and an uncommon degree of wildness in his looks." Wilson was, in fact, the best specimen of the somewhat unusual combination of mind and muscle that recent times have produced. He was as much interested in pugilism and the prize-ring as in poetry and philosophy; and he could pass from a fit of the gout to a feat of gymnastics as easily as he could get rid of a jorum of punch at one of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* in Tibbie Shiels's historic hostelry by "lone St. Mary's silent lake." He once leaped the Cherwell where it ran twenty-three feet from bank to bank, and as a student he followed up a dinner in London by walking the fifty-eight miles back to Oxford. On one occasion he had a triumphant encounter with a prize-fighter; and there is a story told of him emptying a cart of coal on the street, after unyoking the horse, because the animal was being ill-treated. The latter incident shows that, after all, there was a tender heart in the rough husk, a fact to which evidence is indeed borne by many little circumstances in his career. He shared with Scott the love of birds and animals of all kinds, from the dog Rover, who, crawling upstairs in its last moments, died with its paw in its master's hand, to the sparrow which frequented his study for eleven years, and which, boldly perching on his shoulder, would sometimes carry off a hair from his lion-like head to build its nest. The *Noctes Ambrosianæ* are long since out of date, but traits of such broad and genial humanity are unaffected by the devastations of time. We forget the works; we remember the man.

As a critic Wilson belonged to the old tomahawk school, but, curiously enough, while nearly everybody else was hitting hard at the despised "Lakers," he was speaking of them with something like enthusiasm. In Wordsworth's case at least there were probably personal reasons for this. Living for a long time in the same neighbourhood, he knew the poet of "The Excursion" as well as any one. "Many a day," he told Willis, "I have walked over the hills with him, and listened to his repetition of his own poetry, which of course filled my mind completely at the time, and perhaps started the poetical vein in me." Contemporary critics declared that Wilson's verse was only an echo of Wordsworth's, but as nobody reads it now, the point need not be discussed. The interesting thing is that he could praise

Wordsworth when he had nothing but scurrilous invective for Keats. Perhaps if he had "walked over the hills" with Keats he might have praised him too!

Wilson was a comparatively rich man when he first took up his abode among the Lakers. His father, a Paisley manufacturer, died when the boy was in his twelfth year, leaving the family a very considerable fortune. It so chanced that after taking his degree at Oxford young Wilson had the bad luck to fall in love with a lady who, unknown to him, had given her affection to another. It was the time of the Rousseau fever, and accordingly we hear from the rejected one a good deal of talk about blowing out his brains, about joining the expedition of Mungo Park to Timbuctoo, about never being happy again, and so on. But the case did not prove so desperate as all that; it was got over by a little travel. In the course of his wanderings Wilson landed in the Lake country, saw Elleray in the charming village of Windermere, and bought it. No doubt he was struck by the lovely character of the scenery, for Elleray, a delightful cottage residence standing in its own grounds, commanded magnificent views of mountain, lawn, and forest, rising above the waters of Windermere, the noblest sheet of water in all England. But there were other considerations. Westmoreland was the home of the wrestlers; and Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Southey were already there to make the district a centre of intellectual light. Wilson sailed his fleet of boats on Windermere, reared his game birds, and became the enthusiastic patron of all manly sports; but he aspired to be a philosopher as well as an athlete, and he knew that nowhere else could he have so much philosophy within so limited a radius as here in the heart of Lakeland.

Wilson unfortunately had to part with Elleray for some years. He got married (he said he wanted an anchor "most confoundedly") in 1811, and four years later the unencumbered fortune of £50,000 which he had enjoyed since his father's death was entirely lost to him through the dishonesty of an uncle. It was just such a blow as fell upon Scott through the failure of Constable, and the one rose to it as heroically as the other. To Wilson, indeed, the misfortune proved a blessing in disguise. It spurred him to an effort which, as the country gentleman in easy circumstances, he would probably never have made; and although the literary result of that effort is but little valued now, the knowledge which we have of the man himself comes largely from the time when he found it necessary to keep his shoulder at the wheel. After leaving Lakeland, Wilson settled in Edinburgh, committed himself to literature, and in due time became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University. By-and-by his financial resources increased, and he resumed occupation of Elleray, where, meanwhile, a new and larger house had been built. There he spent most of his University vacations, and there, in 1825, he was visited by Scott, whom he fêted with a brilliant regatta on

Windermere, and afterwards took him to see Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, as well as "Mr. Southey in his unrivalled library."

It was indeed—for the Lake district at any rate—an unrivalled library that the laureate possessed at Greta Hall. I suspect that to Southey, whose diligence was almost mediæval in its severity, it must have seemed as if all the other Lakers were but playing at literature. Byron spoke of his appearance as being *epic*; and Hazlitt always pictured him with a commonplace-book under his arm. Coleridge could not think of him "without seeing him either using or mending a pen." Rogers declared he was never happy except when reading a book (he read on his constitutional walks!), or making one. His industry was indeed prodigious, even according to his own account of it. In one of his letters to a friend he sets out his day's programme as follows: "Three pages of history after breakfast (equivalent to five in small quarto printing); then to transcribe and copy for the press, or to make any selections and biographies, or what else suits my humour till dinner-time. From dinner-time till tea I read, write letters, see the newspapers, and very often indulge in a siesta. After tea I go to poetry, and correct and rewrite and copy till I am tired; and then turn to anything else till supper. And this is my life." It was almost as bad as Newton, who, according to Dr. Whewell, resided in Trinity College "for thirty-five years without the interruption of a month." No wonder a friend asked him in astonishment: "But, Southey, tell me, when do you *think*?" Whether he thought or not, he certainly produced an abundance of literature of one kind or another. The list of books and articles at the end of his son's *Life* fills nearly six closely-printed pages, two of the entries alone representing six large volumes. The poems themselves occupy a royal octavo in double columns of small print running to eight hundred pages, while the letters take up some five thousand more. It is pathetic to think of all this sedulity in view of posterity's judgment on the product. Macaulay doubted whether Southey's poems would be read after half a century, but he had no doubt that if read they would be admired. Considering that Scott enthusiastically enjoyed these same poems it may seem bold to laugh at Macaulay's prophecy; but the fact remains that Southey is no longer read. "One reads him with delight once, but never takes him up a second time." So said Shelley. Does any one dare to say the same now?

Greta Hall, where Southey established himself in 1804, and where Coleridge, who was his brother-in-law, spent much time with him, is in the very heart of the Lake country. It is near Keswick, and some fourteen miles from Rydal Mount. The poet lived there till his death in 1843, when he was laid to rest in Crosthwaite Churchyard. There is a fine recumbent statue in the church, the inscription for which was written by Wordsworth, who succeeded to the laureateship. Southey's last days were saddened by the complete loss of his mental faculties. He had ruined himself by his incessant toil, and, like the elm-tree pointed to by Swift, *died at the top*.

J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

## AN AMATEUR ARCHITECT

WHEN, with a view to the larger life, Miss Catherine Conway accompanied her literary niece to London, her friends thought the adventure foolish. Agnes, the young woman who profited by the move, while she welcomed the proposal to share purses, was privately of the same opinion, and dreaded considerable inconvenience from the prejudices sure to beset a woman of her aunt's age and inexperience. She was, however, to learn the nature of an ardent spirit that has been repressed for fifty years.

But connections did not baffle Miss Catherine; cheap restaurants held no terrors for her; and after the memorable Friday, begun at Cheyne Row with a sigh for poor Jeannie Carlyle, and ended at Petticoat Lane with an inspection of the Jews' purchases for their Sabbath, Agnes left her to go the pace alone.

The elder lady was interested in architecture, and would sit at nights improving, on paper, the public buildings she had visited during day; indeed, she is said once to have hinted that St. Paul's would not have suffered had Destiny summoned her to Wren's aid.

She was peculiar on one other point: she had faith in Literature as a profession. Of all who applied for fame she deemed the calling and election sure, so that, from the first, she basked in her niece's brilliant future, and had the Interviewer always in her eye.

By Literature I must explain, however, that she did not understand Journalism—it was her only obsolete view—and she cultivated the lady journalists round her, not for what they were, but for what her niece was to become.

The twenty pounds down, which was what Agnes received for her first novel, and which she, herself, thought an overestimate of her selling powers, was certainly a blow to her aunt, who, however, had read of the struggles of genius, and in her own life had experienced hope deferred.

What really exercised her mind was the publisher's omission to ask the new author to his house. "How are celebrities to meet," she exclaimed, "if nobody brings them together?"

After this she became very attentive to the lady journalists. "We must make connections," she would explain to Agnes; "literary lions may need their mice." And the mice on their side petted the little merino-gowned lady who took them jam of her own making, and walked on tiptoe lest she should disturb the flow of their ideas.

The externals of Bohemian life she soon mastered, and often copied, at an heroic sacrifice.



One night she rose from the maroon rep sofa, which with its suite of chairs had known honour of old, in the little drawing-room across whose windows the lilacs met. Now she stood aloof and frowned on it.

"I don't see any one with this sort of furniture," she sighed. "They seem to go in for a barer style—and oh! my dear, it *is* bare. I hope the poor things have enough blankets. I shouldn't like to sell these, for I've sat in them all my life, still——"

Agnes took pity on the poor lady, and perjured her æsthetic soul. "Nonsense, Auntie, stick to your sofa. It is all right, and think of the comfort."

"That is just what I am thinking of, dear. Their gimcrack wicker-work and their flimsy bamboo are a terror to my old bones. Still, if the sofa stamped us as what they call Philistine——"

"I shouldn't mind if it did."

"Genius, my dear, is apt to err by underestimating appearances. Those who aspire to lead fashion do well to begin by following it."

The case against the sofa was dismissed, however, and the room retained its comfortable corner.

While busy with her novel Agnes had been excused from accompanying her aunt on her social rounds, but when that was finished her presence was, without her knowledge, offered at various Bohemian gatherings. The first of these was in the adjoining flat, where two sisters specialised on that side of the emancipated life which gives on the domain of flirtation.

"The Jacob girls are very smart, you know," Miss Catherine remarked as they were about to enter. "You mustn't mind if they patronise you. They don't know as yet, of course, who we really are."

The evening dragged, at first, for both aunt and niece. They were mentally a cut above the shallow paradoxes and personalities that passed, in this clique, for wit; and when a plain, solid-looking old man arrived, they exchanged a look of relief.

The new-comer seemed confused by the light and chatter, and stood irresolutely in the doorway.

"Shall I pilot you to Miss Jacob?" said Miss Catherine, glad of something definite to do. But that young lady had seen him, and, breaking from her circle with the sort of excuse one makes when interrupted by a tradesman, hurried over to him.

"Sit down there, Daddy, and don't fuss," she whispered crossly, drawing him aside. "I thought you knew not to come on our At Home evenings. If you like to sit there you can stay, but you mustn't expect us to talk to you; you can see our hands are full."

The old man subsided like a whipped dog. "I must wait till your brother comes," he said, "for we arranged to meet here."

"That is another thing that must stop. I won't have our chambers used as a domestic rendezvous."

Miss Catherine, who had overheard them, now advanced. "Oh! please introduce me to your father," she exclaimed, "I should so like to make his acquaintance." "I wanted them all to hear," she confided afterwards to Agnes, "for I saw the minx was ashamed of him. And indeed, my dear, she had little need; it was a surprise to find her so respectably connected."

She sat down by the old man, beckoning Agnes to the other side, and when, later, the son joined them, they made quite a comfortably assorted quartette.

Harold Jacob was less genial than his father; in fact he was, at first, perceptibly sour, and confessed to a loathing of literary women, but after a while his manner began to imply an exception of Agnes.

The old man lived in the country, and when his son had carried him off to his train, Miss Catherine and her niece withdrew to talk their new friends over.

"Do you know, my dear, I liked those men. There is something sterling about them. They gave me the sort of comfort this sofa does," and Miss Catherine sank contentedly into its solid embrace.

"They certainly are not built of bamboo," Agnes agreed, "but isn't the son rather sulky?"

"That's his sisters' doing. He'll change."

Miss Catherine had invited Harold to call, and within a week he responded to the invitation.

Agnes was feeling ill and depressed, but Miss Catherine came through the evening with flying colours. Once, when she had left the room, Harold turned to the limp figure on the sofa and said abruptly, "You'll have to get out of this, you know. You've got the worst form of London fag. I know what it is, for I suffered from it when I came up to town first and was reading for the Law. I recovered without having to turn tail, but I'm a stolid, insensitive sort of beast. You should fly for your life. It's a sort of atmospheric blood-poisoning, if there's such a thing; I've known lots of cases. It attacks people fresh from the country."

The next time he called Agnes was in bed, and while her aunt and the young man discussed her in the next room, lay tossing to the roar of the traffic, sick for the birds and the blossoms and the green, sweet monotony of her home.

As the younger woman grew weaker the older one seemed to desert her more and more, and was sometimes away for a whole day. But one morning, when Agnes was wearily telling herself that the lilacs must be in bloom, her aunt came bustling into her bedroom.

"Now, my dear, you have rested long enough. I am going to take you to the country for a whiff of fresh air."

So the invalid was dressed and bundled into a cab. Leaning back in the train with closed eyes, she was conscious of a delicious breeze on her cheek, and when transferred from the train to a hire, and whirled off through green lanes, the sickness of her soul abated.

Miss Catherine was her liveliest self. "We're in Hertfordshire. Yes, it has points. Surrey is more the rage, of course, but they tell me it's getting used up, and the rents—oh! ridiculous, my dear. And really it doesn't matter where you live, so long as you get hold of a workman's cottage and hang it with Morris papers. Or if it isn't really a workman's cottage—and they are not so easily found—you have only to talk as if it were, and you are quite in the swim."

They were mounting a wooded hill; the narrowing lane grew steeper; and when they had risen several hundred feet, they turned across an orchard-planted slope where a score or so of houses were dotted at spacious intervals among paddocks and fruit-trees. The hedges were of cloistral height, but over the white-painted gates there flashed glimpses of old-fashioned gardens.

"What a paradise!" sighed Agnes. "Isn't there an inn where we could stay the night?"

"Suppose we try here," said Miss Catherine gaily; and the cab drew up before what seemed to be a private house rather out at elbows.

Agnes staggered down the path, vaguely meaning to die on the doorstep if refused admission. But she was spared that melodramatic end, for the trim maid-servant who opened to them was a girl from their own Derbyshire village, and welcomed them in without inquiring their business.

Miss Catherine tripped upstairs, while Agnes followed, weakly wondering, and was ordered to lie down and rest upon an æsthetic counterpane. She heard something about Mr. Jacob and brandy, and awoke to find a glass at her lips, and her aunt against a background of Morris paper. Her eyes wandered from the wall to the window, which was wreathed in budding pear blossom, and she lay a while envying it the slow sunny hours of its unfolding.

Shortly after Miss Catherine had left her, with the assurance that they were to pass the night there and injunctions to fall asleep, she heard voices beneath the window.

"Harold will be glad she has taken to the place. He tells me she was kept in the dark."

"Yes, I judged that a pleasant surprise was just the tonic she required."

"I hope she will soon be all right."

"Of course she will. She'll have books, and blossoms, and air, and digestible food, and that is all a genius wants."

"If she is fond of blossoms she'll get plenty of them here. What with the peaches and the cherries, and the damsons and the late Victorias, and then the pears and the winter apples, it lasts well over three months."

"Splendid! And we have quite an acre of trees. We could start fruit-growing as a profession."

"Well, the most of your trees blossom, but as for bearing——"

"I'll make them bear. Market-gardening and that sort of thing is all the rage in literary sets."

"Their books would need to pay them, for they're taking the right way to lose money."

"Oh, nonsense! You'll see what I'll make of this place. What with restoring, and altering, and enlarging, it is going to be simply perfect."

So when Miss Catherine came up to administer the tonic, she found, perhaps to her disappointment, that it was already swallowed.

She was gratified by the effect, however, which was magical. Agnes rose to breakfast next morning, and plunged into the new life with a will.

Only three of the rooms were furnished, two of them on high-art principles and with an eye to the ever-imminent Interviewer, and the third with the suite of maroon rep. The others were inspiringly bare, and for their outfit a second-hand dealer was drawn upon who, being an acute man of business, soon gauged Miss Catherine's taste—or to be more accurate, her ideals—and foisted on her all the dust-buried rubbish that the sanity of the neighbourhood had rejected. Chairs, tables, cupboards, fire-irons, mounted the lane in bewildering fragments, and were piled up in the back-yard for repair. A fire at a manor-house near, added a ton of charred remains to the hospital.

"It would have been convenient to buy them new, but so terribly suburban, my dear," sighed the purchaser, setting to work with glue and paint.

She made quite a successful staff-nurse, and with Agnes as probationer, and Mr. Jacob as consulting physician, soon pulled the invalids round.

There may have been some latent distrust of the healthy appearance induced, but it was never admitted, save by the implication of very tender usage.

There was more, when finished, than the house could possibly hold, but Miss Catherine had her remedy for that.

"They were really such bargains, my dear, that it would have been wicked to let them go, and as we are sure to require extensive additions soon, it is as well to be prepared."

At which Agnes would sigh. It was all she ever did now to combat her aunt's delusions as to her future.

"I shouldn't wonder," Miss Catherine went on, "if the best plan were not to build a wing out to the west. We'll walk round together, and I will give you my reasons."

From that time they inhabited many mansions. The days which did not alter the whole fabric brought, at least, a new arrangement of rooms, and Agnes, when led along imaginary corridors, used to annoy her aunt by taking wrong turnings, and mistaking cupboards for bedrooms.

But Mr. Jacob never went astray. He plodded over each new

erection as carefully as a valuator, critically examining joists and floorings, and once Miss Catherine was enjoying the view from a turret, run up the same morning, when she was cruelly hurried down by his assurance that the founds at that part would not stand even a second storey.

Sometimes the orchard was retained, and sometimes it vanished before a stately avenue which swept from various points to various pillared porticoes. But when avenues were in favour, Agnes would try to bend them away from the old apple-trees, which she felt had earned, by many a generous bygone summer, a right to their pensioned age.

There were architectural problems of no mean order involved in those air-built additions. The existing house, starting from a nucleus of three rooms, had expanded under various owners, and recorded a clash of purpose at each stage. But this was nothing compared with the defect of a foolishly-chosen site.

The property was one of four lots, intersected by cross-roads, and, at the corners formed by the intersection, the four houses had been set down with only the roads between.

The two ladies suffered less than their neighbours, as they possessed the only second storey, and, from the upper windows, had a view uninterrupted for miles; but still the arrangement worried Miss Catherine, for Mr. Jacob's gable commanded a weak point in her privet hedge, and imposed a restraint on her toilet.

When Agnes sought to encourage her in comfort and economy by doubting whether so old a man could see what they wore, or, if he could, would give it a thought, she was put down at once. "Men's eyes are always young enough for some things, my dear, and Mr. Jacob is not a Methuselah. He has certainly not turned sixty. Did you see him putting in our celery? There was nothing decrepit about that."

Nor was there; and it was only just that he should have his meed of praise, for he did them yeoman's service, and, as even unskilled labour was at a premium in the district, saved their purses more than they knew. Still, it was as a listener that he helped them most at least, so Agnes thought, when his patient attention to Miss Catherine's schemes freed her to go on with her work.

"I've hit upon something even better," was Miss Catherine's almost invariable form of greeting; and the reply, "I was sure you would," though from some it might have sounded equivocal, was given in all good faith.

Harold was less friendly than his father, and his filial week-ends grew rarer. Once when Miss Catherine arraigned him for this neglect, he laughed, "Why, the Dad doesn't need me now, and—well, I've other things to do." So the spring went its way, unpolluted by flirtation.

Miss Catherine was openly disappointed. "That young man has fallen off," she said to Agnes. "I should have said, wouldn't you, that he was just the man for a woman of genius?"

One hot afternoon, when but to move was to be full of sorrow, Agnes crossed to Mr. Jacob's, as she often did, for the shade of his clematis-fringed bower. Looking round the garden, she was suddenly struck by the contrast between her own arid plots, that had been so much talked and fussed over, and the luxuriant fulfilment of those before her. Here everything was quietly achieved. The owner was staking his lilies, and she walked towards him, noting how perfectly all was ordered and timed—fruit-trees pruned, creepers trained, walks weeded, flowers blossoming in the forefront of their season; the work necessary for procuring a succession performed. She felt convicted of egotism and clamour, and she resolved to shift the centre of interest to the place where it was really deserved. So she proposed to Mr. Jacob that her aunt and she should drink tea with him in his arbour.

He was delighted, but also embarrassed, as his housekeeper did not love his new friends.

"I'll see what Jane can do," he stammered. "She's not always at her best with company."

Perhaps it was because Jane did so little, refusing to go beyond a plate of bread and butter, and their host was so chagrined in consequence, that Miss Catherine was her most tactful self, and, forgetting her own plans for a time, gave her eyes to the accomplished beauties that had impressed Agnes.

It was a Saturday, and Harold joined them. At first his society was damping, but when Jane brought out for him the cake which she had refused to the others, the constraint was laughed away.

Miss Catherine's schemes, however, were her King Charles's head, and she was back at them before long.

"By-the-by," she said, turning to Mr. Jacob, "I have slept over my last idea, and I really don't believe it can be bettered. We carry the present front along to the stable, which we turn into a billiard room—you remember—lit from the roof, you know, with the loft floor removed. That gives us a southern exposure. We add the stable-yard to the garden and so get a stretch of lawn on to which a French window will open. In the upper storey of the addition there will be a smoking-room and balcony, besides some extra bedrooms, and from there the view will be magnificent. But perhaps you don't quite follow. If you come with me, I'll turn the thing round, and show how it would stand on your ground."

She hurried off with her listener, and Agnes and Harold went to look for late strawberries.

"Is your aunt really going to ruin your place? What can you want with more rooms?"

Agnes made a despairing little gesture. "You may ask! She's making provision for the day when the world is to flock to my feet. Has she never spoken to you of my tremendous future?"

Harold laughed unamiably. "I've read your book."

"And you perceive the humour of the situation?"



"I perceive the absurdity. The book's good enough in its way—grammar right and all that sort of thing—a good, honest bit of work, but you know as well as I do that it will never sell to that tune."

"It has brought me twenty pounds."

"Then why do you let her go on?"

"With her air-castles? Because her temperament forces her to build them, and my talents, which you gauge so accurately, are as good a foundation as any other."

"It's rough on you. Won't she round on you when she discovers the truth?"

"She will never discover it; she will go on planning."

"And you've tried to undeceive her?"

"I have written the novel, have I not?"

Harold laughed. "Well, yes, you have done your best. And you're sure she'll stop at planning?"

"Oh, certain. She may count her chickens before they're hatched, but she's too shrewd to carry them to market."

"Well, I'm glad, for it's a sweet little place. I haven't much poetry in me, but what there is has always been appealed to by its old-world, let-alone look. Everything seems to have grown as it wanted to. If I could imagine romance anywhere, it would be behind those hedges. They are green and thick and high enough to shut out Time himself. I hate to see old things meddled with—old trees, old folk, old houses. They seem, all alike, ivied over, and fastened to the ground by a hundred roots."

Miss Catherine was approaching, and, imagining she had caught Harold's drift, chimed in. "Oh, I quite agree with you! I simply love old things. I'd far rather alter that house, for example, than start building a new one. But as I was saying," she resumed, turning to Mr. Jacob, "the scullery would come out to about here, and the rest of the strawberry-bed would be paved for the back-yard. You see the excellence of the scheme?"

"Ye—es," hesitated Mr. Jacob, "I'd have liked to keep the strawberry-bed, though; it was renewed last year, and the Paxtons have been doing well."

"But," Miss Catherine indulgently reminded him, "it is our garden, not yours, and all that we lose is an old codlin. No, I have thought the thing out thoroughly, and for appearance, convenience, economy, I am sure my plan is perfect. Just look at the houses round about us, those that have been enlarged"; and she swept the neighbourhood with a condemning finger. "Look at the hideous, costly additions! And so it will go on, ugliness growing and growing. Oh, if this place were mine!"

Mr. Jacob caught fire from her vision. "No, no, your example will be followed. When do you think of beginning?"

The vision faded, the air-fabrics swayed, but the one of her more particular habitation was buttressed by a glance at Agnes. "I can't

afford to begin at once, but the need will soon arise, and with it, it will bring the means." And she passed on with a confident smile.

"It's a beastly shame," scowled Harold, and Agnes felt that his pity supplied a want. "You needn't tell me you're not trying to live up to it. You think, no doubt, that by slaving away long enough you'll be a big success in the end. Well, you won't; you're not a genius, and on the other hand, you're not a fool, so you won't catch the million either way; and the fact that I tell you this plainly, proves that though I don't think you a great writer, I consider you perhaps something just as good. If you try to be an ox to gratify that aunt of yours, you'll only burst like the frog in the fable. I'm thankful the Dad never had her craze, for more than half the places here belong to him, and he could have made a fine hash of it. He thought once of enlarging this house, but since my sisters left him the matter has dropped. No, excuse me, you're not going into work. I'm down for a week's holiday, and I can be just as intrusive as my father."

For a week the juniors lounged in the sunshine, discussing themselves and the Infinities, while the seniors talked estimates and elevations. Mr. Jacob, the most faithful of Boswells, followed Miss Catherine, note-book in hand, entering architectural details.

One day, after a pause of wrinkled musing, he asked, "And this plan, you say, would apply equally well to any of the other houses?"

"Certainly, with modifications."

"And you would like to see it carried out?"

"Of course. But there is no chance of that. Their owners are sure to have the usual suburban ideals."

But though Mr. Jacob was listener-in-chief, Agnes still did interim service. Their "miniature manor-house"—so Miss Catherine styled it—was the conversational accompaniment of every meal, and in order to introduce variety, she would sometimes hint at obstacles.

"Yes, the view will be splendid, but wouldn't it be tragic if we were built in?"

"Built in! How very absurd! No one could do that—on the view side at least—but Mr. Jacob, and there is nothing to fear from him."

"But he might sell or let, or die."

"Nonsense! He's not the selling or dying sort. I have sounded him on both points. That place is like a bit of himself. He would as soon part with one of his limbs. And as for dying, why the man is in his prime, and, he tells me, has never known a day's sickness."

"But he, too, might want to build additions."

"My dear! This from you, a student of character! Men of his stamp would no more dream of shifting a brick than of tampering with the foundations of the world."

The end of the week sent Harold back to his office, and the ladies on a visit to some kinsfolk, where they were due for a wedding. They were loth to leave, for there were geranium cuttings to be struck, and

several rows of green peas still unplucked. Besides, it did not seem possible that the plums could swell unobserved. But Mr. Jacob took over every duty, and seemed eager to have them gone.

Their intention was to pay a round of visits, returning in time for the autumn fruit-crops; but, by the end of a month, they had been more than amply dosed with nursery-ridden households and domestic horizons.

"Now we shall live again!" cried Miss Catherine, as the train whirled them back to the home of their adoption. "You'll have a lovely quiet time for your work, and really show the world what you can do. Spring is the best publishing season, to my mind—less risk of being crowded out by mere numbers—and it's the best time, too, for building."

The weather had been wet, but they found the hill lane, which was never much to boast of, worse than any weather could have made it.

"They must have been carting here," Miss Catherine remarked to the driver.

"Yes, 'm, Jacob's a bloomin' nuisance with his buildin', that 'e is. 'E's takin' the worth out of 'is road tax."

They turned the corner as he spoke, and saw a heap of bricks opposite their gate. Workmen were coming and going, and hammers rang loud behind Mr. Jacob's hedge.

Miss Catherine sprang up for a fuller view, and Agnes saw by the pale bitterness of her face what had happened. Both women were silent; words died before such treachery. It was a tragic home-coming.

They were sitting in the study upstairs, flat with fatigue and disgust, when the traitor was announced.

"Go down to him, my dear, if you can; I really can't trust myself." And Agnes went to save appearances.

Her manner was more tell-tale than she was aware of, and the arch smile of her visitor vanished.

"Dear me! is anything wrong? Your aunt—is she with you? Is she well?"

"She is all right, thank you. We are both rather tired of course."

"Naturally. I should have thought of that. I won't keep you now. I'll look in to-morrow. Your aunt would get a surprise?" and the smile flickered up again for a moment.

"She did."

"You're back before the date you mentioned, or you would have found it completed. That's what I've been pressing on for. Though, to tell you the truth, it will be a comfort to have her advice. There are one or two things that are bothering me."

"I'm afraid you mustn't count on her. We are leaving the neighbourhood, you know."

Never was man more crushed. The pained puzzle of his expression, and the dazed way he took his leave, testified to the strength of the

counterblow. His good faith was as plain as his stupidity, and Agnes found both a little pathetic; she had an eye, too, for the humour of the thing, to which Miss Catherine was quite blind.

Next day they moped indoors, but in the cool of the evening, when the terrible hammers were still, Agnes slipped into the orchard.

Harold Jacob, who was sauntering up and down outside, saw her through the hedge and came in. His manner was grave and worried.

"It's a bad business," he began abruptly, "and I'm sorry for you and your aunt, but, by Jove! I'm sorrier for the Dad. This is the first time I've been down since you left, so I knew nothing of what was going on till I arrived to-night in answer to a wire. It seems he meant it to be a surprise all round, and I found the poor old boy in despair, but without a notion of how he had sinned. I have enlightened him, and if it's any comfort to you to know it, there isn't, at the present moment, a more wretched man in Christendom. But, mind you, though I was so down on him, I don't think him so tremendously to blame. You know what a lot of rot your aunt talked about that plan of hers, and how enthusiastically he, poor old idiot, sucked it in. Naturally he thought to please her by carrying out her scheme, since she admitted she couldn't carry it out herself."

"There is no question of blame," said Agnes quietly. "The place is simply spoilt, and my aunt is determined to leave."

Harold kicked a stone from the path. "Is this, then, such a serious crumple in the rose-leaf, that the leaf must be thrown away. More serious things may be lost than a view."

Agnes glanced at his gloomy face. "I shall lose more," she said demurely.

Harold flushed.

"I shall lose those plums—they drooped golden above them in the sunset—and the wallflower I have sown against the spring, and your father's clematis-bower, and—well, frankly, the embodiment of the comedy of cross purposes which I should always have seen in those additions. There is no view there," she went on, pointing up, "only a bird and a bough against the sky, and yet I am quite contented—of a sudden she had really become so—and, after all, your father has only done as he would have been done by, if we had had the money. No, there is nobody to blame, and yet we shall have to go. You don't build castles in the air, or you would know how important the site is. The place is spoilt for Auntie, and her will is stronger than mine."

"Only up to a point."

"Oh, if it came to the eternal verities!" And before Harold could prove that these were involved, she hurried from him into the house.

"So that was young Jacob," said Miss Catherine, "I hope you showed him how strongly we feel."

"He knew without my showing. He also has been kept in the dark. The whole thing had been planned as a surprise and a com-

pliment. You may imagine the poor man's collapse. As we hadn't scrupled to propose building in front of him, he probably imagined he might do the same to us. It isn't every woman, Auntie, who has had such a tribute paid to her taste."

"That's all very well, my dear, but it won't give us back our sunshine."

It did something almost as good, however; it restored Miss Catherine's temper, and by next morning she was watching operations from an upper window with unmistakable interest.

Suddenly she started up. "My dear, I cannot bear it. Do you see that oriel, there? That is where the French window should have been."

"You had better go over and tell him so."

She jerked the window cord. "Yes I must—I simply must."

She returned in high excitement. "Oh, my dear, I've had a time of it. I wasn't a minute too soon. And how I've had to talk! Do you know what I found him about?—the best, the absurdest of men—he was actually giving orders to have the whole of the addition pulled down. He had got it into his ridiculous head that we were vexed or something. He would hardly listen to reason. Oh, my dear, he is a perfect gentleman—absurdly so—such refinement of feeling! Of course I pointed out to him the wicked waste, the injustice to his children, too (I used every argument), and enlarged on the improvement it will be, if it isn't bungled, that's to say. Imagine an *oriel* window, the common suburban oriel! That I told him I would allow him to alter. We'll make a fine thing of it, you'll see. And it won't really interfere with our plans. As I came in just now I had one of my inspirations. This isn't the site for us at all. Why on earth should we stick in the corner when the whole field is at our disposal? The other end is the place for us—the wood at our back—shadowy vistas, you know, and, in front, the entire stretch of the paddock—a southern slope for a terraced garden—a miniature French château. I have never tried that style, but that's what it must be. Now won't it be distinguished? It would have been sheer madness to spend money in adding to a few poky rooms."

"What would you do with the present house? Pull it down?"

Miss Catherine gazed at Agnes with the abstracted eye which awaits its vision.

"I have it!" she exclaimed. "We'll follow a royal example; we'll make it our Petit Trianon. How one idea begets another! The French château gave me that one. And we'll devote it to fêtes and junketings—nightingales and Japanese lanterns, and lovers whispering beneath the apple boughs. We'll give a Louis Seize fancy-dress ball as a house-heating. My dear, we shall make, as well as revive, history. Won't the interviewers be busy!"

Having decided on the future of her property, Miss Catherine seemed to dismiss it from her mind. The house opposite absorbed her more

and more, and when she was visible at all to Agnes, it was as a hurrying, dominating little figure against a background of scaffolding.

Sick of the noise and the sun-thieving wall, which Miss Catherine's enthusiasm was urging toward a third storey, the younger woman abandoned her study and the Morris paper, and took refuge in a leafy nook behind the house. There, soothed by Nature's sweet monotonies, and the old-world air that began to re-envelop her, she forgot the mansions that were to have been, the avenues that were to have led to them, the French windows, the balconies, the corridors; while the humble, fruited walls before her grew permanent and stable.

She had written some rather good chapters, when an apple, falling at her feet, reminded her of the cosmic law of increase, and sent her into the orchard with a ladder and a clothes-basket.

She was perched in the fork of a codlin when Miss Catherine passed below on her way out.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, "I had almost forgotten a fruit-room."

"Where do you mean to have it?"

"Oh, in some convenient corner," with a wave towards the orchard opposite; "I will have to read up the subject."

"The hay-loft will be good enough for us, I suppose."

"Quite, quite; an excellent idea."

So into the hay-loft Agnes mounted. The floor was musty with old bran, and she was labouring with a broom, collecting a heap of then shooting it into the yard, when an angry voice called up, "Hallo! Hold hard, there! What the devil do you mean?"

She leaned over to see Harold Jacob, the colour of a hay-stack, coughing and stamping underneath.

"Oh, it's you. I beg your pardon. What are you up to?"

"Clearing out the loft for the apples. There's more coming. Stand back."

But he was already up the ladder, and had taken the broom from her hands.

"How long have you been in this hole?"

"Half-an-hour or so."

"Well, I shan't be half a minute. Be off and clear your lungs, and pitch me up an apron or something, will you?"

When the apples which Agnes had gathered were stored, Harold climbed the codlin tree for more.

"By Jove! This is life!" he exclaimed. "No thrice-breathed airs up here."

"You don't inhale it very often. It's a month since you visited your father."

"I've been taking a partner into the business, and there has been a lot to arrange. That, of course, has kept me rather tied. Now that there are two of us I shall be freer in the matter of hours, so I mean to settle here, and turn up in town of a morning at the railway company's convenience."



"Your father will be glad."

"No doubt."

Astride one of the boughs over Agnes's head, he went on. "When I was a greedy and sentimental little chap—robbing this very orchard, indeed—I remember thinking how jolly it would be to drop the apples into some pretty girl's apron. Would you mind holding out yours? I didn't say you answered to the description. Look out! Here's another. Well caught! And I used to look across at this house, and plan to live here when I was married. The Dad worked in London then, and I was to go up to town like him, and come home at night with my pockets full of money. A little wife was to meet me at the gate—I fancy she had inky fingers—at any rate she was to give me a jolly welcome, and feed me—memory is quite distinct on that point—on cream and apple tarts."

Such banter was difficult to meet. Agnes had climbed a few rounds of the ladder, and stood gazing through the trellis of leaves at the towering walls opposite. The workmen had left for the day, and her aunt and Mr. Jacob were walking up and down in earnest talk. Jane came out to them with some message, and Agnes noted her friendly deference towards Miss Catherine.

"Do you see that?" laughed Harold. "Jane always was a time-server. She has resigned herself to the inevitable."

"I don't understand."

"She does."

"You mean——"

"Of course I do. In spinning imaginary yarns you've missed the real one."

Harold watched Agnes with a malicious smile, as she struggled against the preposterous truth. It was a brief stand, for, even as she gazed, Miss Catherine slipped her hand through Mr. Jacob's arm, and disappeared with him down the orchard.

"And a jolly good yarn I call it, too; for they're going to live happy ever after. Rather he than I; but the old boy likes a racket."

Agnes endeavoured to regard the matter unselfishly, but had a sudden, dismaying sense of a horizon narrowing to the girth of one inadequate purse.

"I hope—I truly hope—they will be happy." Then after another pause. "It's good-bye to my apple trees."

"Yes, she's stolen a march on you, rather."

"How about your sisters?"

"They are jolly well served."

"And you? Shall you still live at home as you intended?"

"Yes, if you do. But I thought it might be better for us over here. What do you say? I'll take over your lease, on condition that you transfer yourself with it."

"To expire at the end of three years?"

"Well, no. I should prefer you as a freehold."

Upon this Harold slid down the bough to discuss the matter in more detail, and so worked on Agnes's generosity at last that she not only agreed to the bargain but promised to throw in the welcome and the cream and apple tarts.

There was mutual confession that evening. "My dear," Miss Catherine wound up, "think of the curtains he might have chosen. Nottingham lace, perhaps—and poor at that—for those windows. I could not have risked it. Now I shall furnish for your guests, for, of course, you will go on with your writing: I shall look to you to fill my house. Everything here you must keep, except perhaps the maroon sofa. I must stipulate—I really must, my dear—for one plain, comfortable corner."

MARGARET ARMOUR.

#### CUPID'S REVENGE

THEY toyed with Love one idle Summer's day  
Within an old-world garden, sweet and fair,  
Then said "Good-bye," and laughing went their way,  
Nor either dreamed the other much would care.

But Cupid, who had marked their careless joy,  
Swift from his quiver drew a feathered dart,  
And bending back his bow, the wanton boy,  
With aim unerring, pierced both to the heart.

And now for ever, through the long long years,  
Near, or apart, in sorrow and in weal,  
'Mid sunny hours or blending mist of tears,  
Each bears a wound no touch, save one, can heal.

FOLLETT THORPE.

## LETTERS FROM THE NORTH

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE VALLEY OF THE RHONE," ETC., ETC.

CARE AMICE,—We had left Vik with sorrow and regret. The Graces had added much to the pleasure of our short stay, and we should have been glad to accompany them to the Vöringfos, and repeat our experiences. Yet first impressions never are renewed; the first press of the grape is the sweetest; a second visit to the Vöringfos might have brought disillusion. It would have done so, for the day was cloudy.

Our regret in leaving Vik was not repeated in leaving Odde. Yet had we remained I should no doubt have renewed some of my old thoughts and remembrances, for it really seemed as though every one went off that morning, leaving Odde to peace and repose. The little vessel was unpleasantly crowded.

We steamed down the Sörfjord, with its mountains and glaciers; whilst on the cultivated hill slopes the farmers to-day were rather more in evidence than they had been last night. Again we passed Ullensvang, with its Gothic church and swampy wastes, where in rainy seasons the Will-o'-the-wisp plays its fantastic tricks and comfortably deludes the simple country-people. Opposite, the Folgefond glacier was visible, with its blue fields of eternal ice and snow.

So we made way from the Sörfjord into the Gravenfjord, and up to Eide.

Here to our comfort and consolation there was a great jail delivery. Almost every one disembarked. All were bound for Vossevangen and Fleischer's noisy and disagreeable hotel: some on their way to Bergen by train, others for Stalheim, the Nærodal, and Gudvangen, and so out by the Nærofjord into the Sognefjord; thus going over some of the most enchanting ground in all Norway.

The quay at Eide was lined with vehicles of every description from trilles to stolkjaerres. In these days the only conveyance not to be found is Norway's supreme carriage, the comfortable carriole, which holds one person and is light and speedy. These carriages year by year are growing more and more rare; and even where the people have them, they are not above a small deception and telling you they have them not. Several times on insisting that I would take nothing else, carriages were quickly produced with a bad grace, even after they had declared they were all out.

The reason for this of course is that a carriole takes only one person

to each horse; a stolkjeærre takes two persons. In a very few years the carriages will have disappeared from all posting stations, and only the private houses of the country will possess them. The stolkjeærre, unfortunately, is very uncomfortable in comparison with the carriage.

As the little steamer touched the pier, the first to land was the German "Cook," whose huge body—he must have weighed at least five-and-twenty stone—quite gave the vessel a list as he jumped on shore. Then rapidly going down the quay, he chalked the backs of a dozen vehicles—stolkjeærres and trilles: the latter holding four people—and thus provided for his exceedingly nondescript flock. It was quite an exciting and amusing scene. Every one rushed about as if half



VIK.

demented, endeavouring to secure some sort of conveyance before the German "Cook" had appropriated all.

One small man under his wing had evidently lost his baggage. He tore to and fro like a lunatic: grasped the "conductor," and seemed about to knock him down: 4 feet 2 against 6 feet 6, and 7 stone against 25 stone. Then he rushed to the steamer and commanded the captain not to stir until his lost property was forthcoming; and the captain nodded and smiled and gave the signal to go ahead.

The little man would certainly have become insane, but at that moment he caught sight of his missing baggage strapped on to the back of a stolkjeærre just starting for Vossevangen—a mistake due to a too officious post-boy. The way in which he rushed up to it, seized

the pony's head, and rescued his property was our last and most amusing impression of Eide.

"That little man ought to have been an actor," said L. "If he could go through all that upon the stage his fortune would be made. Strange, by the way, how few good actors there are nowadays, and not one of the first rank. Genius seems at a premium just now; in fact, has absolutely died out in everything except Science. That is going ahead by leaps and bounds."

As L. is himself going in for Science, and intends some day to revolutionise a few of the world's fixed laws and principles, this was paying himself a very pretty indirect compliment. I have, however,



HARDANGER FJORD, FROM VIK.

no doubt that he will accomplish his end, and wake up some morning to find himself famous.

As we drew away from the quay, a long string of vehicles might be seen winding up into the road leading to Vos: a drive of inconceivable beauty. Mæland's hotel nestled between the hills, the centre of a few trees and shrubs—a building that had no existence in those years I have spoken of; that first visit to the Hardanger, when celestial music charmed the midsummer night, and our friend Rogers (no relation to the poet) met us under the midsummer moon. Such recollections make "a song and a silence in the heart, that in part are prophecies, and in part are longings wild and vain." Across the chasm comes to

me the loss of A., to whom I was a species of pope and in whose eyes I could do no wrong. We have few enough of such devoted friends any one of us, and when they go hence the loss is irreparable, and grief tempts one to exclaim, "What shadows we are, what shadows we pursue!"

I was fated again to be charmed with music in the neighbourhood of the Hardanger.

It was during our last year's visit. We had come down in the early morning from Vossevangen to catch the steamer for Bergen, and having an hour and more to wait had turned into Mæland's for a rest and refreshing coffee. In the drawing-room was a gentleman whose face puzzled me by its familiarity. He was at the piano, singing in a pure baritone voice of extreme richness and beauty. Still the face haunted me, until I concluded that he belonged to the musical world, and I was familiar with the face through his photograph. No mere amateur could sing as he was singing.

We went out, and on presently returning, found he had left the piano, whilst in the adjoining room a young lady, his daughter, was playing. But it was such playing as one seldom hears: full of strange sweetness and boundless expression; playing that took you out of yourself and landed you in realms of bliss, so that a dreamy repose took possession of the senses, and you were willing it should go on for ever. I would give much to meet that young girl again and renew those charmed moments.

"It is exquisite," said L. "Playing so rarely satisfies one nowadays, or comes up to one's ideal of what playing ought to be. The new automaton machine, which certainly performs wonders, is quite equal to nine out of ten of the players one hears, whether in public or private. Of course I except the few stars shining in the musical firmament."

And the girl went on playing, and we went on listening, until time was up, and we had to hurry down to the quay.

The steamer made way out of the Gravenfjord into the larger section of the Hardanger. But the morning was cloudy, and much of the charm of our day had vanished.

We thought of the Graces, and wondered how they fared, and what their impression of the Vöringfos would be. Compared with ours, it must inevitably fall short; and they would say that we had coloured and exaggerated what to us had been charming and delightful beyond description. They would even declare that the multebaer at the Fosil wanted flavour, the cream substance, the coffee aroma. Praise of a place and person should seldom go before them.

In due time we reached Norheimsund, but the balcony was now empty; there were no Graces to wave us good luck; and as the skies were grey the place did not specially appeal to us. Even the lovely Steinsdal was to-day "under a cloud," and we felt that its exploration might well be deferred to another opportunity.



Next we crossed to Sundal, one of the Hardanger's most picturesque stations, where again we had a fine view of the Folgefond and its glacier, and where one lands for a splendid excursion, which need not be done on foot. You ride to the margin of the glacier and cross the snow in a sledge: an experience not easily forgotten.

So we made way down the fjord, calling at the different stations, exchanging cargo and passengers, repeating all the experiences of Friday. But we had no interesting people on board; the Graces were absent. All the morning, as the clouds came up and rolled away, we hoped against hope. If wishing could have done anything, the skies would not have had the thinnest veiling of vapour; but wishing was useless, for the clouds grew deeper and denser. Everything was grey and gloomy.

We passed through the wooded channels of Godösund. Even under dark skies the wooded islands were beautiful, and one longed to take up a temporary abode here. But the place was deserted; the hotel and its dependencies were shut up; the boats were all moored for the winter, and the sea baths were closed.

No passengers landed, none came on board. A man—who might have been the last man on earth—accompanied by a melancholy-looking dog, stood on the miniature quay. A bag was thrown at him, and he returned the compliment with another bag: then wished them good-day in subdued tones, looking very sad and solitary as the little steamer went her way and cut him off from the outer world.

After this it grew somewhat depressing—cold and shivery, with an occasional attempt at a shower. We braved it manfully and kept to the upper deck, but every one else went below and became pleasantly invisible.

Then we passed into the multitude of rocky islands that seem to guard the Hardanger so jealously against vain intruders; rocky islands that on Friday had been bathed in all the colours of a rainbow atmosphere, but this evening, as light fell, looked grey and threatening. Next came the bolder coast—the iron-bound coast of Norway, that is steeped in magic and hypnotises every one who enters her charmed circle, taking their hearts captive for ever. Soon after, the mountains of Bergen, unmistakable in form, loomed up, and about eight o'clock we turned joyfully out of the wind into the sheltered harbour, glad enough to land.

"This is my second trip down the Hardanger," said L. "I am destined not to have fine weather on those occasions. Do you remember what a fearful day we had of it last year? And the lovely music we heard at Mæland's—have you forgotten? I wonder who the girl was that played so wonderfully? Shall we meet her again this year?"

"Consult your Second-sight," I observed.

"Second-sight tells me we shall *not* meet," he laughed. "In fact, from to-morrow we shall see very few people anywhere. We are

taking an unbeaten track, and shall have it chiefly to ourselves. Hurrah!" throwing up his cap just as he had thrown it up on the Hull quay. "Ah! Bergen at last and *terra firma*," as the boat glided up to the wharf. "And there is the hotel porter with *backsheesh* written large in both eyes. It is unmistakable. Well, he shall work for his *backsheesh*."

And loading the man with baggage, he bade him make the best of his way to the hotel.

"I am absolutely starving," said L., as we walked down the narrow main street, "and believe I shall collapse before we reach the inn. They feed you abominably on board that steamer—quite an exception



SAEBO FARM: ON THE WAY TO THE VÖRINGFOS.

to the rule. Come! we are getting on. Here is the square, and there is Bennett's. Really we should be stranded without Bennett."

A few moments more and we reached the hotel.

As we did so the avaricious porter came struggling round the corner with his load, having arrived by some short cut. In the hall the portier—a very attentive man in his way—received us in a gold-braided uniform only a degree less fine than a field-marshal's; politely hoped we had had a successful journey and a good time; and chalking up our names with a flourish on the black-board against the numbers of our rooms, despatched a servant to show us the way. To L., by virtue of his 6 feet 2, he had reserved the state-room of the house, an enormous apartment. As usual I had to bring down my mind to narrower dimensions, and am fast learning to be humble.

The hotel was not quite as rackety as we had found it last week. Friday's boat had gone off with a small crowd for Hull, and Saturday's with another small crowd for Newcastle: and really, until the Hull company provides better boats, it is a question whether the Newcastle crossing is not preferable. It should be encouraged. One thing is certain: the officers are all Danish—it is a Danish company—and nothing can exceed their civility and attention.

But if Holdt's hotel was less noisy within, the same pandemonium existed without. Again the two orchestras kept up their rivalry, playing against each other with all their might and main; and again



NORHEIMSUND.

the next morning L. declared that his nervous system was being undermined.

It was very early next morning, for we were going off by another eight-o'clock boat, this time bound for the Sognefjord, not the Hardanger. Before seven o'clock we were in the breakfast-room. The good old waiter—he who grew lachrymose when the light of other days was brought to bear upon him—had prepared everything, and though not present at this early hour, his satellites represented him, revolving around us, indeed, rather more than was necessary. But they were doing their best, and if *backsheesh* was in their hearts, at least it was not in their eyes. The worst of tipping these people of Norway is that half the

time they take it by no means graciously, and never even say thank you for it.

We went off, not in the highest spirits, for if yesterday had been cloudy, to-day was worse; a steady rain was falling. Only L.'s optimism kept us to our plans.

"Nothing shall induce me to turn back," he said, "and where I go you have to follow. Fancy our parting company and perhaps never meeting again! Nothing more likely than that I should drown in a fjord, or get lost on a mountain. This is only a second edition of the Hull platform, when you wanted to give up Norway. Imagine what we should have lost—one of the most perfect little expeditions of our lives! Christina Rossetti says there's no turning back in the down hills of life—which, by the way, seems hardly true divinity—and there's equally no turning back in the uphills of Norway. So come! let's buckle on our armour and sally forth to fight the Giant Clerk of the Weather."

By which means—this inexhaustible torrent of words and will—we found ourselves on board the steamer for Vadheim.

We left Bergen harbour in the mist and the rain, and to-day turned to the right instead of the left. There were very few passengers on board, and most of them were foreigners, and none were going our way.

For a time we steered amongst the rocks lying between the coast and the sea, and felt how marvellously beautiful it would all be if we only had blue skies and sunshine. Even as it was, the beauty was very real. For a good part of the time the rain ceased, and the rocks and the coast were seen veiled in mist—a very poetical effect. Then we turned into the Sognefjord, and though we did not reach its finest part, its wild and savage grandeur was from the first extremely impressive. The grey and sometimes weeping skies were in absolute harmony with it.

We journeyed thus the whole morning, and at one o'clock the steward announced dinner, and if we did not take it on board we should have to dine with Duke Humphrey. If those were not his exact words, that at any rate was his meaning. Remembering our experience on the Hardanger, I hesitated.

"The man who hesitates is lost," said L., "and I shall be lost and utterly done for if we dine with Duke Humphrey. That sort of mistake upsets the digestion more than anything. Half a loaf is better than no bread, and a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. There are no end of proverbs to support me. Come along!"

I meekly followed the torrent of words and will. It is even pleasant sometimes to let others decide things for you. "When I am undecided," said a friend once, "I feel as if I should lose my senses," and eventually they did lose their senses. Coming events often cast their shadows before. For years a man has a conviction that such and such a thing will happen to him, and eventually it does happen. It is not second-sight. It is not the theory that that will happen which is foretold *because* it is foretold; it is a psychological consciousness of certain

events, a certain doom, lying in the future, from which there can be no escaping.

We were rather glad to get into the shelter of the saloon, out of the mist and the rain. L. took up the wine-card and proceeded to consult it, giving me no chance of a choice.

"This is not a day for beer," said he. "That was all very well on a hot bright morning, and after our hard journey to the Vöringfos. You have neuralgia; here is some very fine old port on the list; nothing like old port for neuralgia. Steward, bring us half a bottle of this very fine old port, and open it carefully."

It proved exceptionally good, and very moderate in price.

"This is a discovery," said L. "Fancy coming to Gammle Norge for old port, and making the discovery on board a little Sogne steamer. The next move will be to lay in a stock of this old port, which is to be had for a mere song." And he proceeded to make a careful note of the address on the label. "Of course," he explained, "I mean that *you* shall lay down the wine, and open a bottle of it every time I come to see you. We will limit ourselves strictly to a bottle a day."

Not only was the wine *Ar*, but the dinner was excellent, quite the best we sat down to in Norway, ending with *multebaer* and cream.

"This is really remarkable," cried L., after the *multebaer* had been disposed of and coffee brought round. "The captain should be given a first-class certificate if he hasn't one already, the steward a piece of plate, and the cook a decoration. If we only had fine weather overhead, we should be as jolly as sandboys."

"The fine weather has broken up for good," I returned with a due proportion of melancholy. "We shall be wise to get back to Bergen, and take the first steamer to England. Wet weather in Norway is the culmination of misery."

"Not at all," returned L. "That manner of looking at the dark side of things and meeting trouble half-way is deplorable; it is fatal, and the worst policy in the world. I have got through many a difficulty at Eton through sheer determination to look on the bright side of things. Many a time when I hadn't done a stroke of work all day long, and knew what I might expect next day, when next day came I was better prepared than any of them, and carried all before me."

"How about lights out at 10.30?" I asked, as I had asked before.

And as before he answered with a laugh: "The exception proves the rule."

We went up on deck. The weather had not improved, but the opposite. Rain was coming down with steady determination.

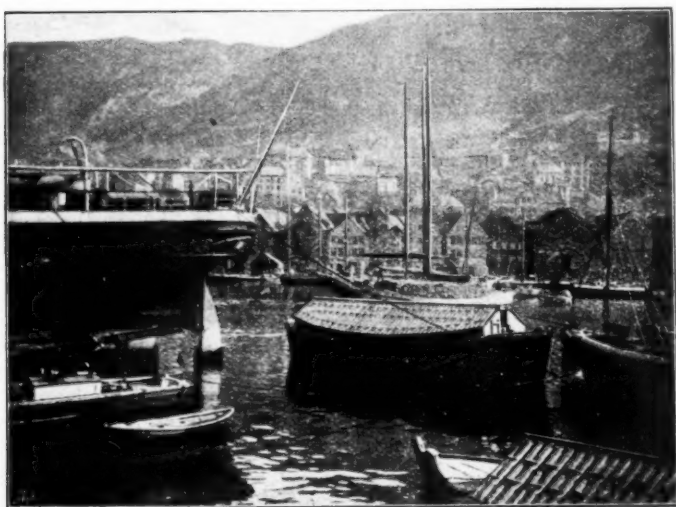
"Never mind," said L., "my seer's gift tells me that to-morrow we shall have glorious sunshine, and have it for the rest of our time. *Mark my words.* I hope that fine old port has dissipated your neuralgia?"

"It has quite gone. Your remedy was sovereign."

"Bravo! Then you've no excuse. *Tout va bien! Vogue la galère!*

With these mackintoshes we could defy a waterspout. I wonder how the MacDougall is feeling? Probably that he has jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire. A little gentle rain is all very well, but waterspouts are fatal to fish, to say nothing of human beings. It never rains but it waterspouts, I hear him saying. Do you think he was persuaded into accompanying the Graces to the Vöringfos yesterday?"

"I doubt if they condescended to attempt his conversion; *le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle*. Three ladies travelling together may go anywhere, and prove a match for any one. They have no need of any *preux chevalier* to do battle for them—much less one who throws the glove unwillingly, or does not throw it at all."



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Here the steamer curved round to the left into the Vadheimsfjord, and a little ahead of us was Vadheim itself.

It is just about here that the Sogne begins to be at its best. Hitherto the waters have been too wide, the mountains too far off; but here in narrowing and winding waters the mountains rise majestically and to greater heights; towering, frowning walls of perpendicular granite, grey and cold, wide and savage; often snow-crowned, for snow frequently falls up there in midsummer, and on some peaks the snows are eternal; and, lying on wide undulations or in deep rocky crevices, you catch sight of the blue ice of the glacier, that somehow can never be seen without a thrill, a certain feeling of awe. There is so great a sense of mystery about glaciers as well as of majesty. Those ever-



lasting, ever-moving fields of ice that seem almost sentient; that once were masters of the world, and will be so again if we one day return to the ice age; mysterious forces that even now seem to be scarcely understood, and that, on close inspection, almost appal you with their vast and overpowering extent.

But in the narrow Vadheimsfjord we turned our backs upon the Sogne, and saw that in fair weather this little arm of the great fjord must be singularly pleasant and beautiful; Vadheim itself, lying at the mouth of two exquisite valleys, proving a welcome resting-place for a time.

The hotel is so much on the banks of the fjord that its balcony



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almost overhangs the water. To the left was a waterfall, tumbling in ever-changing devices, and close by it a factory, strange sight in this far-away spot. What could they make there that was necessary to mankind? We never discovered.

Few people landed here, but there were few vehicles to be obtained, and we had to put up with what was offered. This was a *stolkjaerre*, and the landlady informed us that if we bribed her with gold she could not produce carriages—a bustling, capable sort of woman, with the off-hand manner some of the Norwegians possess: a manner from which there is no appeal.

Before great misfortunes small troubles become insignificant; and in face of weeping skies a *stolkjaerre* gave rise to no special request. Yet we quite believed that hidden away in one of the sheds were

carriages in number. The good woman's manner was decisive, but not convincing.

"You see how wise it was to dine on board," said L. "Here we should evidently have found nothing, and we save time."

It was now about three o'clock, and we started in our famous stolkjaerre; the skydsgut, a very decent and superior boy of great intelligence, sitting on our bags strapped on behind, and beautifully flattening our collars and cuffs.

"They should stick up a notice on these stolkjaerres," said L., "as they do in some of the cottages in England: *Mangling done here*. One really ought to go about with those hideous painted wooden boxes you see in all the shops. The Norwegians adapt themselves to circumstances—like the rest of the world."

We started, and no one followed us; but a stolkjaerre had gone on ahead, containing a young woman, who was evidently not used to travelling, and kept herself very much under her umbrella. A young man, dressed in black, walked beside her, holding the reins and flourishing a whip. He seemed about twenty-five, and somehow there was a conscious look about both of them. We several times tried to pass, but ineffectually; the man would not make way. It is nearly always so in Norway; and the disagreeable custom is frightfully irritating. A driver will never let anything pass him if he can possibly help it. Though you may be going at the rate of ten miles an hour and he at five, you are brought up behind him as against a brick wall. Endeavour to pass, and you will probably only lock wheels, increasing difficulties, but not gaining your end.

On the present occasion we followed closely, on the alert to seize the first opportunity; the man would not budge an inch and the road was narrow; to the right, high mountains; on the left, a precipitous bank and the river. It was evidently fine scenery, though shrouded in mist; in winter here they scarcely see the sun from the closing in of the mountains, and in spring travellers are exposed to frequent avalanches and showers of rolling stones.

We followed the stolkjaerre so closely that we could hear these two irritating people conversing. The subject seemed deeply interesting—to themselves.

"What are they saying?" said L., turning to the skydsgut. The boy—he was about seventeen—though as annoyed as we were at being delayed, was laughing all over his face. He spoke very good English.

"Those two are friends," he said. "They have known each other a long time, and he has been courting her—every one knows that. She has been in Bergen, and they have not met for two months. Now he is asking her to marry him."

"Interesting," cried L. "But this is hardly the weather and the place for proposing."

"Oh, he is impatient," said the boy. "I daresay he has asked her many times before, and she has said no."

"And what does she say to-day?"

"Her voice is rather lost under that umbrella, but she says if he can keep her well and make her mistress of a good farm she will have him."

"Mercenary wretch," laughed L. "If she loves him, she ought to be willing to break stones on the road with him."

The boy shook his head.

"We are not so foolish as that in Norway," he said. "Everybody knows that love will not thrive on starvation. Besides, she is the better of the two, and if she marries him she will leave a comfortable home for one that is not so good."

"He must work hard and improve it," said L. "The man is a handsome, well-made fellow, with an honest face and plenty of energy. She might do much worse."

"I think so too," said the boy. "Every one speaks well of Christopher. All the same, with the best will in the world a man doesn't always get on. He may be born unlucky. We believe in good and bad luck in Norway."

"I hope she is pretty," said L.; "but she keeps herself so buried under that umbrella it is impossible to see her face."

At that moment, as though the fates had heard and wished to gratify him, a sudden gust of wind caught her unprepared, carried off her umbrella, and left her exposed to the public gaze. We used our opportunity, and saw a very pretty and very mischievous face, all smiles and blushes, looking helplessly after the erring umbrella that Christopher was flying over the bank to capture. It was evident to us that she had made up her mind to become Mrs. Christopher.

"She is a bit of a flirt, and is teasing him," said L. "It is quite clear that she means to have him."

"She mustn't tease him too long," said the skydsgut, shaking his head. "Patience won't last for ever."

The girl's stolkjeerre had to move aside, and at last we found ourselves in front, leaders of the road. The boy, who had not been particularly interested in the courting, and had chafed at the obstruction, now whipped up his horse, and away we went, flying over the muddy road.

The valley began to widen. We had crossed a bridge, bringing the river to our right; and again crossed, bringing it once more to our left. A frothing, foaming river, shallow for want of rain, but very picturesque. The route we were now travelling is, in fact, one of the most interesting in Norway; but to-day, unfortunately, all its beauty was veiled in mist and rain. Still, we saw its possibilities.

"Yes, it is a pity," said L., "but wait till to-morrow. The day will be as brilliant as to-day is gloomy. I positively see it. My faculty is developing by leaps and bounds—something in the Norwegian air."

We passed two small lakes, and then the road led us through a wood that only wanted sunshine to make it perfect. Pearly drops

hung from the feathery branches, clear and bright against the sky. A couple of squirrels ran up a tree and looked at us out of their small black eyes, wondering, probably, how we could have the bad taste to travel in such weather.

"Do you think it is a matter of life and death?" one said to the other. "No; they don't look anxious enough. But to-day they can see nothing, and will only get wet and cold. They haven't fur like us to keep them warm and dry—and even we don't like it. If they would only stop, we could come down and visit them. I like them; we can trust them—especially the tall one." Again I had to be humble.

We went on and left them chattering behind us. The fir-cones hanging from the trees looked damp and depressed; many were lying



THE QUAY, BERGEN : SHOWING HANSEATIC HOUSES.

upon the ground. Presently a man sprang out of the wood, for all the world like a bandit. We were startled. In one hand we saw a gleaming knife, in the other a blunderbuss. Our lives were not worth two minutes' purchase.

We looked again; there was no murderous weapon this time; our fears had worked upon our imagination. With all the coolness in the world the man sprang up behind, and took his seat beside the skydsgut. L. groaned.

"More mangling," he said. "We shall look very dilapidated by-and-by."

L. has his share of vanity, and very properly. I wouldn't give a fig

for a man who has no regard for his personal appearance ; it shows something very rotten in the state of Denmark.

"Who is this impudent fellow?" he asked, turning to the boy.

"Only the postman," replied the skydsgut. "Every one gives him a lift when they can. It is quite understood, and he never asks leave."

Whereupon the privileged intruder, feeling that he was the subject of conversation, and wishing to distinguish himself, blew a blast of his horn that went echoing through the trees of the forest, gave us a momentary deafness, and so startled the horse that he swerved against a fir-tree and very nearly upset us. In retaliation the indignant skydsgut administered a well-aimed blow at the postman's stiff cap, which very much interfered with its gracefulness. The postman took it in good part, feeling that it was a well-deserved chastisement, and also that he was a tenant of the *stolkjaerre* on sufferance.

We climbed upwards, and passing out of the wood overlooked a valley stretching away at right angles, buried in mist, which looked for all the world like the shifting sea. Out of this rose the dim outlines of Holmedal Church, a dream-vision beautifully softened by the vapour. The rain had now ceased, to our great comfort, though the clouds were still low and threatening.

"The beginning of the fine weather," cried L., with quite irritating optimism. "Don't you see the clouds struggling through the sun?—no, no, I mean the other way about ; that blast of the postman's horn has disturbed my brain. I wonder it didn't bring *Titania* to the scene."

Soon after this we reached Sande, where the postman took off his damaged cap, made us a polite bow, and departed. Here, too, we had to part company with our intelligent skydsgut, who could take us no farther, and we presently found we had exchanged very much for the worse.

This house at Sande was Sivertsen's Hotel. They seemed capital and very civilised quarters, and Sivertsen himself an admirable man, who spoke excellent English. It was, of course, out of the world and homely, simple and primitive, but everything was the pink of cleanliness and order.

"I think we should here take some light refreshment," said L. "Who knows what may be in store for us by way of privation? Perhaps nothing till to-morrow morning."

And as they announced that everything was ready, having just prepared dinner for other two, we profited by the timely circumstance.

The other two proved an old Norwegian divine and his prim, old-fashioned wife, who looked very much as if she had been carved out of wood and then galvanised. Her head was adorned with stiff corkscrew curls, which had once been black, but were now mostly grey. Her face was round and red, looking very much like a strongly-coloured apple.

The minister himself was tall and portly and well preserved, and in his day must have been very handsome. He took every care of his little withered, prim, old-fashioned, galvanised wife, paid her every attention, and seemed to think nothing too good for her; for which he was to be duly honoured. Chivalry is so far dead in the world, that the rare occasions on which one meets with it need no noting to be remembered.

"We are going on to Förde," I said to the landlord. "I see it is the same name. Perhaps you have both hotels?"

"No," he replied, "that is my nephew. But he is a very good man, and will make you comfortable. People stay here for fishing, and they stay there for fishing. There is good fishing in both places. I prefer Sande to Förde. This is high up and open; that is too low down in the world; a damp hole, with water all about. I cannot breathe there. Very beautiful, no doubt; more beautiful than this, but rheumatism in all your joints is a great price to pay for beauty of scenery. Of course, it is all right in summer. Ah! here comes your skydsgut with carriages; I specially sent for carriages. They won't give them if they can help it, but they nearly always have them. When you want carriages, you must always insist upon having them."

Sivertsen's was not a posting station, and his advice was unprejudiced. Not having to supply people with the means of travel, he could tell the truth. But to us it was no news, for we had learned it by experience last year only too well.

We set out for the next station, Langeland. Still the rain kept off, though the clouds looked threatening as ever. The stage began by a steep ascent and a very fine prospect, of course much marred by the day.

Our postboy was a man of about thirty, strong and sturdy, who might have spent his earlier years at sea. His expression was not in his favour; there was a sullen determination about him which boded no good to any one who thwarted him or stood in his way. He was surly and uncommunicative, and did not in the slightest degree unbend at our sociable efforts. The man was his own master; carriages and horses belonged to him, and he was therefore fairly independent. But the worst and most irritating feature about him was, that although after the ascent we turned into a new, straight and level road, he persisted in keeping at a walking pace.

We were quite helpless. In Norway one is utterly in the hands of these men; offend them, and it is in their power to retard your progress as much as they will. The drive in fair weather was evidently very fine; the mountains about us were splendid, and the mists that wrapt about them to-day only added to their mystery. Snow lay on the mountains, and in a lake below mountains and snow and wreathing mists and vapours found their reflection. Some portion of the land was boggy, and here and there black peat-stacks, freshly dug out, announced the presence of humanity. Where they lived was a puzzle



—behind the hills, or in the hollows of caves, perhaps. We saw no signs of habitation.

The slow, irritating journey was over at last. Langeland Station, lying off the road to the right, announced itself, looking very forlorn, gloomy, abandoned, and desolate.

As we turned off the road the wretched skydsgut urged the horses to a trot, making a spurt at the last. L. drew up the reins.



THE FISH-MARKET, BERGEN.  
(L. called it "A group of horrors.")

"No, my friend," he said; "you have hitherto walked for your own pleasure, you shall now walk for ours."

The man looked as though it would be a pleasure to commit murder, but L. was not to be lightly tackled. A few minutes more, and we were at the station. It still seemed deserted; not a soul was in sight; we called, no one responded.

We went in. It was the ordinary room one sees at so many of the stations; large and square, a low ceiling and wide window with latticed panes; a wooden table and a few wooden chairs. But here

the place looked more desolate and neglected than usual; there was an air of discomfort about everything.

"It gives one the horrors," said L. "The most abandoned spot I ever saw in Norway. The only place I have yet found with a suspicious air about it. If that murderous skydsgut stayed here the night, we should never leave the place alive."

"But where are the people?" I asked; for having called again and otherwise made our presence heard, still there was no response.

"Having committed a series of murders," laughed L., "conscience has overtaken them, and they have murdered themselves. Be sure your sin will find you out."

It really felt and looked like it. There was a strange air of mystery about the place; a creepy atmosphere; a strong sense of gloom and depression. Our surly skydsgut in no way concerned himself about us, but turned his attention to his horses and carriages, and left us to our own devices.

Looking round, we saw a building opposite, but apparently no entrance to it. We crossed the large desolate yard, and found a door on the other side. On going up to it a woman rose just within the doorway, a startling and fearful apparition. She rose and rose until it seemed to us that she must be seven feet high. Her gown was a rusty black. Her face resembled a bird of prey—eagle eyes and nose, and a wide mouth that showed enormous, cruel-looking teeth. Even as I looked an old sentence hardly thought of since the days of childhood rang through the brain: "*C'est pour mieux te manger, mon enfant.*" And forthwith Red Riding-Hood was devoured.

This apparition glared at us. First she looked frightened, then defiant. We were persuaded she had dead bodies inside the place, and had not had time to bury them. Her hair was unkempt and hung down her back; black hair stiff and wiry, like horsehair, surrounding her head like a halo, but a black halo, evil, portentous.

"You are a sweet-looking creature," said L., boldly taking up his parable, though it was plainly visible that cold water was going down his back. "First cousin undoubtedly to the Witch of Endor, if not the very witch herself. For I fancy that these witches grow old and haglike and then live for ever. Can you conceive a more terrible punishment? If we could capture this vampire—she must be a vampire embodied—and take her about in a caravan, we should make a fortune. Now, madame, as you seem to be in sole possession of this heaven-forsaken place, perhaps you will be good enough to prepare us carriages and horses. You must be a magician, and can do it with the wave of a wand."

The awful apparition made no sort of response, excepting a noise which sounded like the grinding of teeth—sharpening them no doubt for the approaching human banquet. Like Captain Cook, we were to be eaten up of savages. Then stretching out a long arm and a clawlike hand, she pointed in a fierce and ferocious manner over our shoulders. We

looked backward and saw that we stood almost on the brink of a shuddering precipice.

"Ah, ha!" cried L., "that's the way the old fiend does her work—a push and a shove and over we go, and no one is any the wiser; and they have a fine banquet in the dead of night; eat our flesh and drink our blood, and grind our bones to make their bread."

We turned again, and the doorway was empty; the apparition had disappeared without sound or movement. Gingerly putting our heads inside this unholy place, we found it empty, no vestige of human being anywhere.

"The creature has become disembodied and gone back to her vampire form. We are in danger," said L.

But as we turned into the yard, we found the vampire, mysteriously as she had departed, must have held communion with some one, for from the fourth side of the black wooden shed a man appeared, and quickly crossing the yard, entered a stable. Moreover he was quite a decent-looking man, well clothed and well fed, with nothing mysterious-looking about him.

Our hopes revived, for until now it had looked very much as though we must pass the night in this evil-suggesting station. The man brought out a horse and began harnessing it to a carriage.

Whilst he did this L. tried to throw a little light upon the mystery of the apparition.

"That is a queer old lady you have in there," he said, pointing to the barn. "Is she human or supernatural? What does it mean?"

The man evidently understood English better than he spoke it. He first touched his forehead, then pointed to his mouth; but whether the latter gesture meant that the vampire was partial to human flesh or was in the habit of indulging in strong waters, he did not make quite clear.

Having harnessed the second horse, and a boy appearing on the scene in the same startling manner—it was just as though they dropped down from the skies or came out of the earth through a trap-door—the latter must undoubtedly have been the vampire's way of travelling—the man announced that all was ready.

With a distinct sense of relief we turned our backs upon this mysterious and uncanny station. We had felt doomed, condemned, in that terrible atmosphere, and the gathering shades of evening had lent all their weird and sad effect to the strange unearthly scene and impression.

As we started on our way we positively looked back to see if the vampire were following us in the shape of a bat, flitting with noiseless wings; but the air was free; there was nothing to be seen; the vampire had perhaps returned to her embodied form, and was worshipping at the shrine of a black bottle. We whipped up our horses, and felt like those who had been granted a reprieve.

This last stage of our day's journey was the finest of all. In clear weather and sunshine it would be difficult to do justice to its splendour. As it was, the evening was distinctly in advance of the day. For some time the rain had ceased, and now at the going down of the sun—of which we had caught neither glimpse nor glimmer—the mists were dispersing and the clouds lifting. The skies were grey, but in the evening light, now rapidly passing into gloaming, the country was quite visible.

The new road is good; the old road was very difficult, and sometimes almost dangerous. We soon entered upon a very sharp descent, a series of windings enabling us to accomplish the almost impossible. Far down below us lay the plain to which we were hastening, and we



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thought of Sivertsen's words at Sande: "Förde is too low down in the world for me."

It certainly looked as if we, too, should not be able to breathe when we got there.

Lower and lower we went, passed winding after winding, the mountains rising as we descended. Nothing could exceed the beauty and grandeur of the scene, without doubt one of the finest in the whole of Norway. Every moment brought a change, for as we twisted and turned about the zigzags the mountains appeared to revolve about us, taking fresh forms and shapes; and as we went down, so they seemed to rise upwards as though presently they would reach the skies. On our right was a very picturesque waterfall, the rushing white water standing out in deep contrast with the blackness of the cleft behind it.

The whole panorama was so perfect, so strangely romantic, that we felt we must one day return and devote a few days to Förde, if it proved habitable, that we might grow familiar with the neighbourhood.

What Förde really was we should soon know. For at last we had passed the windings and reached the level of the plain. The mountains had done growing. They towered about us in a sort of amphitheatre, lofty and majestic and singularly beautiful, with a great deal of luxuriant verdure.

The wide valley itself is very fertile. We are here in the district of the Sondfjord, and Förde is its little capital. It lies at the head of the fjord, and the fishing in the neighbourhood is said to be very good.



BERGEN

No doubt Förde, like Vik and Sande, would be in possession of those indefatigable disciples of Izaak Walton, who will travel hundreds, yea, thousands of miles in pursuit of their art. Nothing daunts them. And after all they are in the right; whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well.

Arrived at the end of the last zigzag, we turned to the right hand, and followed the course of the broad river on our left. The shades of night were falling; the mountains were taking on all their mystery, all that darkness and silence which makes them almost appalling just as the gloaming is passing into darkness. There was no light upon the river to-night, for there was no lingering sunset or afterglow in the sky to be reflected. All that was beyond the clouds.

Nevertheless we could see how beautiful was the valley, in spite of the gathering gloom, and in spite of a very damp and depressing feeling. Then, after a spell of the narrow road, which looked something like a Devonshire lane, we crossed a long bridge, and a few minutes after drew up at Sivertsen's hotel.

Notwithstanding the darkness we saw at once that it was a very different station from the last; a long low building in the midst of what looked like a flourishing garden. There were also plenty of houses round about, and so far we were by no means out of the world.

Yet on first arriving we found it difficult to get at the people. The skydsgut, instead of driving into the yard, drew up at the garden entrance. No one was there except an evident Englishman seated at a table in the small room or porch, examining a fly-book by the light of a paraffin lamp. He was intent upon his work; his face was bronzed to a deep copper colour by exposure to the elements; his hair was fiery red, and looked as though he had just seen a ghost.

We waited a moment or two, but no one appeared; we looked for some means of summoning help, but found none; on the left an empty dining-room, on the right a sitting-room, equally empty.

The fiery head looked up, saw our embarrassment, and calmly looked down again. No doubt its owner resented our appearance. Perhaps we too had come to fish, and spoil his water.

"Can you tell us how to summon these people?" I asked at last, seeing no help arriving. He looked up, not very amiably, and pointed abruptly. "Bell," said he, and said no more. The red head was again bent over its precious fly-book.

Then by groping we found what had escaped us in the darkness—a small electric button.

"Fancy an electric bell in this benighted place," said L.; "we shall next find they have a French chef in the kitchen."

Ring the bell, a woman soon appeared and relieved us of our uncertainty. The whole house was in semi-darkness; everything looked gloomy and wet and damp. The rooms she showed us on the same floor felt tomb-like; one night in them ought to give us rheumatism for ever. They were very small, and opened on to the garden, where the trees were dripping with moisture, and a creeping mist hung about the land. We thought of the landlord's words at Sande again: "A damp hole, with water all about." That was exactly the impression it made upon us.

"We might as soon sleep in a well," I observed. "This is positively dangerous. What shall we do, my dear L.?"

"Haven't you upper rooms?" said L. to the woman; "and better rooms? more comfortably furnished and with blazing fires? and large tumblers for whisky-toddy to keep out all that creeping, crawling mist? Why," with a shiver, "the walls positively run down with water."

The woman carried a sort of rushlight in her hand, which made the surrounding darkness more visible, but threw a weird light upon her rough though honest features. She shook her head.



"Fishermén all best rooms," she said in broken English; "best of everything for fishermen. Fishermen stay many weeks; pay not much money; want very much for very little, but money certain."

"Query," laughed L., "are fishermen the greater nuisances in Norway, or Cook's Personally Conducted?"

"One little room upstairs," said the woman, "if shentlemans like have it."

But we preferred to combine our forces, and declined the upper room. We would make the best of this fearful hole, this dripping well, and take the consequences. In fact we had no choice in the matter. After all,



BERGE-OLVE, HARDANGER.

it was as the play-bills say, for one night only. We had to be off very early in the morning to catch the little steamer at Nedre Vassenden.

In the dining-room things rather improved. There was more light and warmth and cheerfulness; and if our supper was not sumptuous, and gave no signs of a French chef, "at least," said L., "it fills up the crevices."

The landlord waited upon us, Sivertsen nephew, a very decent man, in spite of his rather slender supper. He spoke very good English.

"You have passed through Sande, gentlemen," he said, "and probably saw my uncle. A very good man, and makes people very comfortable; but for my part, I would rather be down here. It is too high up here; the wind is cold and sharp, and might give one

rheumatism. Down here we are warm and sheltered. Just look at our fruit-trees and flowers—none better in all Norway; only now the best is over.”

“But what about the damp down here?” said L.; “the mists that rise out of the earth, and the streams that run down the walls?”

“Oh, I always say that means nothing for men who spend half their time in the water,” returned Sivertsen nephew equably, and not without some show of reason. “They get used to water-damp, and our mists never bring fever and ague—never.”

A comforting assertion we took leave to question.

But at least it was evident that the Sivertsens, uncle and nephew, were both contented with their lot. If rivalry was at the bottom of it, they carefully kept it in the background.

“This was a very small house when I first took it,” said Sivertsen nephew, “but I have added to it from time to time, and now there is none better in this part of the world.”

No doubt he was an enterprising man, and the very way in which he spoke English bore witness to his intelligence.

After supper we took a walk up the lane in the darkness of night. Lights gleamed here and there from cottage windows, and presently we reached the church, which stood out quiet and solitary, surrounded by its graves, where certainly the bodies of the dead rested in peace.

The church was dimly outlined, for the night was intensely dark, and it was partly shrouded in mist. Beyond it the mountains rose all around in solemn gloom and majesty. Complete silence reigned everywhere; we saw no one, and not even the flitting of a bat disturbed the air.

“To-morrow morning it may all look very different,” said L., trying to keep to the narrow path in the muddy road; “but to-night we seem to have reached the earth’s *cul-de-sac*: have arrived at the end of all things and must turn back again. A long sojourn here would certainly be depressing—to any one except the irrepressible fisherman, who would gladly take up his quarters in the lower regions if he found there a lake well stocked with trout. For my part I don’t believe I shall ever have patience to take up ‘the gentle art of old Izaak.’ Here we are again at our inn, and every one seems to have gone to bed; all is dark.”

So it proved. The house was wrapped in silence, if not in slumber. They had thoughtfully left us a candle on the table in the porch, which shed a feeble glimmer around and served to guide our feet through the garden to our rooms, where, in spite of mists without and streaming walls within, we also were soon wrapped in sound slumbers.

The night seemed to pass like a flash, and we awakened after what appeared five minutes’ sleep to a new world.

It was nearly six o’clock, and sunshine was streaming in at the window, and there was no vestige of cloud in the sky. The change

was magical. Dripping trees and creeping mists without, and running walls within, had disappeared. The view from the window of garden, valley, and distant mountain was glorious; and by this light our rooms, small and plain and bare enough in all truth, looked much less forbidding than they had looked last night. The air felt warm and delicious.

L. rushed into my room enthusiastically to receive congratulations on his second-sight, and these duly administered, he went back to complete his toilet.

When we went round to breakfast, the landlady was seated at the table in the hall posting up her accounts. She, too, spoke excellent English, and seemed altogether a superior person, almost as though she had at one time fulfilled a higher destiny. There was even a certain sadness in her expression, we thought, as of one who had been crossed in love. But I daresay it was all fancy, and nothing but her natural temperament.

In the dining-room a waiting-maid supplied all our wants, and the old china fowl that sat upon the dish seemed to lay egg after egg with the greatest cheerfulness at L.'s bidding; the supply was apparently inexhaustible.

No one else was stirring, and when breakfast was over and the bill was paid, and we went off with a very impressive farewell on the part of madame to L.—she was evidently not indifferent to the charms of 6 feet 2—we left behind us a house still steeped in repose.

As we looked back down the road, madame's pleasant but somewhat sad face was gazing after us. She made us a very polite and very graceful little curtsy, and was still bending when a sudden turn took us out of sight.

## A WOMAN OF TO-DAY

MRS. JIM sat with her little bronze-slipped feet crossed upon the low fender rail, and the firelight danced over her elaborate coiffure as she turned her head slowly upon the blue cushions of her lounge chair to look at the long, lazy figure of the man by her side.

"Have you quite finished your tirade, Francis?" she said; "I've been listening very patiently, forbearing to ring for tea lest I should interrupt your line of thought. And so you find that there is no good in anything? Society is rotten, and love is a sham—friendship is obsolete—happiness impossible, &c., &c. Oh, I know it off by heart; we all come to acknowledge it by degrees, and then—we accept the inevitable and make the best of it."

"Why won't you help to restore my faith?" said Francis; "I believe you could do it."

"I shouldn't care to take the risk," said Mrs. Jim, making a faint *moue*. "I don't intend to marry again; I value my freedom too much to do anything so rash. You don't wonder at my prudence, Francis, do you, when you remember the past?"

Francis Leigh was silent, recalling those years of hopeless misery for the woman before him—years that might have been happy and glad, for her and for him, if he had not let her slip from his side in a foolish fit of pride and anger.

She had waited a while for the explanation which never came, and then in a moment of pique had been mad enough to fling herself into the arms of a man like James Bullerford. He had been lord and master of her life for ten years—a short span, but long enough for him to crush out her girlhood and blight the flowers of faith and love in her heart—before he was called away (to use his own oft-repeated words) "to join the rest of his sainted family in the kingdom of the blest." Whether the "sainted family" regarded his reunion with them as an acquisition to their midst is doubtful, but it is certain that the withdrawal of his presence was a distinct relief to those who remained below.

"Won't you take time to think it over, Marian?" asked Francis, after a minute or two, gliding back to the old subject.

"No, thank you," said Mrs. Jim decidedly, "I *have* thought it over, long before to-day, because I was quite sure you were going to ask me; no, it's no use, my dear boy, you can't bring back those spoiled years, and they have taken away from both of us something we can never get hold of again. When you marry, you must take a woman, not like myself who has found life a disappointment and a delusion, as you have done; you must seek some one who will be to you as antidote. Why confess it; you have not a single, bright, breezy thought in connection with anything in the world; you are steeped in cynicism; you make a boast of your morbid sentiments

concerning life and love ; you prate for ever of the mystery of sex and all the most modern theories upon the subject, until I am weary of the theme. I am sorry for you—I really am—and I like you, Francis, too well perhaps to marry you now and disappoint you, or *be* disappointed, as the case might be ; and then remember, if I marry again I lose more than half my fortune, and——”

“Many thanks,” said the man bitterly ; “your love is most disinterested.”

“Oh no, indeed, it is not,” replied Mrs. Jim, ignoring the sarcasm ; “I really do enjoy my luxury now, and you can’t say I haven’t earned it. Oh, it’s delightful to be rich *and* free—one can’t deny it.”

“I am not a poor man, Marian,” urged Francis.

“No, but I am very expensive in my tastes, and terribly extravagant. When one has been reined in tight for a while, and then suddenly the curb is withdrawn, one *does* revel in a good spin. Just look at my tea gown ; simple as a child’s frock, isn’t it ? James would turn in his grave if he knew I had given fifteen guineas for it, but now I can please myself what I do, and I mean to be happy in my own way, and to get a little compensation for the past.”

“I cannot say you ever displayed very desperate unhappiness even in the dear departed James’s lifetime,” said Francis with some acrimony in his tone. “I fancy I suffered more in looking on, seeing what I had lost, and realising, when it was too late, what might have been. I suppose a woman accommodates herself more easily to circumstances ; you soon forgot—you were always gay——”

“Gay ! of course I was gay,” replied Mrs. Jim scornfully ; “but what is gaiety ? It is just the drop-scene we let fall over our hearts to hide from the world what is behind. It is pretty enough to look upon if it is artistically done, and as long as the curtain is down it doesn’t matter what struggle and confusion goes on at the back—the onlookers are none the wiser.”

“Then you *have* cared, Marian, after all, a little ?” said Francis, bending forward.

“I *did* care once very much, but that is over, and my mode of life and habits have grown so strong with me that I really don’t know how to dig out my true self. I have so encrusted it with artificiality, that when sometimes it peeps out unawares, it almost gives me a shock. Come, don’t let us talk any more of ourselves, it does no good. Do you know that I have a charming girl living with me at present ? Stay—you are not to be too interested ; she is already appropriated, I believe.”

“Who is it ?” asked Francis indifferently, turning his moody face towards his companion. “I thought I heard a voice I did not know in the garden, as I came through.”

“It is my niece, the daughter of my eldest brother,” answered Mrs. Jim ; “he has had an awful break-down in business and health, and the whole family are suddenly plunged into very low water. Gladys has come to make her home with me till her lover can afford to

marry her; he is an artist, and a dreamer, so she will probably make me a long visit. Most likely she will end by marrying some one entirely different, possessed of greater worldly wealth, and leaving him in the lurch, but *nous verrons*. They have been spending to-day together, and doubtlessly exchanging vows of eternal fidelity, which seldom endure for a year."

"How good of you to burden yourself with her!" said Francis.

"Oh, she doesn't interfere with me in the least, or I shouldn't," admitted Mrs. Jim candidly. "Come with me, Francis, I want to show you a magnificent orchid my gardener has just secured."

They strolled through into the dimly-lighted conservatory, heavy with the scent of flowers growing in profusion on every hand, and stood silently together for a moment. Suddenly they became aware of the presence of two others close beside them, screened by a gigantic palm out of sight, but within hearing. Before they could make any movement a voice fell upon their ears, intense in its earnestness, and unmistakable in its unfeigned truth.

"Gladys, tell me again nothing here will tempt you to forget me? I am working for you day and night, thinking and dreaming of you, beloved, every hour, every moment; you will be faithful—you will not forget?" And the girl's answer came low and steadfast.

"How *can* I forget, when everything in the world speaks of you, and only you? When I wake in the morning, and open my window, I hear the birds singing to each other, and my heart calls out for you. I feel stifled and overpowered here in this atmosphere of luxury and grandeur, and I often escape from it all, and wander down into the woods. And there, I hear the trees whispering together, and they always speak of you; I look up, and see them interlacing their boughs above me, and then I realise how lonely I am without you. Do you know," went on the tender, dreamy voice, "when I was a child, I used to wonder and wonder how fair heaven might be, and I could never conjure up a picture beautiful enough to satisfy my heart, but now—I do not wonder any longer, because since God gave us to each other, to love, I feel for us heaven has begun already."

"Come away quietly, Francis, before they hear us," whispered Mrs. Jim in a voice unlike her own; "this is something beyond *our* understanding."

They slipped back noiselessly into the drawing-room, and as Mrs. Jim bent to rearrange the glowing fire, the blaze suddenly flickered up, and Francis could see how skilfully pencilled were her eyebrows and long lashes, but the tears in the bright, dark eyes raised to his were quite real.

Mrs. Jim became aware of their intrusion herself, blinked them away, and laughed with her accustomed blitheness. "Ring the bell at once, Francis, for the lamps and tea," she said in her sprightliest manner; "I am positively dying for a cup, and yes, I really think my spirits require cheering a little, so if you like you may secure a box for the opera to-night."

JESSIE E. ENGLISH.



## THE WELL OF WAILING

CERTAINLY," said Emilio, with a little flutter of his hand, "it is all a question of temperament. For myself, I would not willingly leave the shadow of St. Mark. Piazza, here, is my library, wherein I read the faces of men—and women. When (as is my hope) it shall be roofed in with glass, there will be no more perfect study in the world. You, no doubt, will be horrified at my impertinence. You cannot appreciate our modern Italian spirit; a practical scheme for draining the canals, and the installation of a system of electric traction, would evoke in you no answering enthusiasm. You have the colder nature of the North. Well, you require a quiet spot for study, remote from the bustle of the city; preferably in some worm-eaten palace. I will see what I can do for you. Oh! these old palaces! when shall I—Behold the man for us!" he broke off suddenly, pointing to a neighbouring table.

Following the direction of his hand my eyes lighted on a little mild old gentleman, of scrupulous neatness, with a close-trimmed white moustache, who sat and sipped his vermouth alone. Emilio had left his seat, and approached him with elaborate salutation. The old man's face lightened beautifully with a smile; then fell grave again as they conversed. Presently Emilio returned and sat down at my side.

"Behold!" said he, in his jaunty way, "your desire in a fair way to be accomplished. My old friend yonder will, for a small consideration, receive you in his house, which is in a truly-retired quarter. Presence of the Devil! I would not spend a week there for the treasury of St. Mark; but that is your affair. The palace itself is, I should say, sufficiently old and dilapidated to please you. The inhabitants, my friend and his daughter, and no doubt a goodly company of rats and spiders. If you like, he will take you there at once; and, if you approve the place, you can send to your hotel for your belongings. Remember, you have craved seclusion, therefore do not complain if I have meted you a full measure. Shall I present you?"

I assented; and as we rose, Emilio laid his hand upon my arm.

"I have all confidence in your respect for greatness in decay," he said seriously.

I reassured him, and, without more ado, he made me known to the old gentleman, who received me with a gentle courtesy very fine and winning. He bore an historic name, once enrolled in the Golden Book: for the present purpose let it be Angelo Badoer.

My future host proposed that we should go at once to see his house. Nothing could induce Emilio to leave his beloved Piazza: accordingly, Signor Badoer and I set out in company to thread the lanes leading

towards the western quarter of the city. My companion spoke little, not so much—as I presently discovered—from reserve, as from an exceeding barrenness of ideas. We passed a greengrocer's, and he became for a moment eloquent upon the price of vegetables. We crossed the iron bridge, and he praised that hideous structure, which is like a sword in the heart of every lover of Venice. His conversation had no flow: it spirted like intermittent jets from a feeble fountain of the commonplace. The way was long and my conductor's gait slow, and I was becoming heartily sick of his society, when we emerged from a labyrinth of squalid lanes upon a neglected *campo*. The little square was unspeakably desolate: grass sprouted in the cracks between the paving stones. Decrepid houses huddled round it like withered crones about a morsel of fire. I judged that we must be somewhere in the district between the Docks and the Tolentini, and this I found to be the case.

"There, Signor," said the old man, pointing to the largest of these ramshackle edifices, "is my house. I make you most heartily welcome."

He spoke, I thought, with a certain grave pride, that did not acknowledge the shabbiness of his abode; and, tugging at a rusty handle, let loose a jangle of discordant echoes within. There was a light step on the flags, and the door was opened by a girl, who spoke with the old gentleman, and then stood back in the gloom of the archway to let us pass. I could see nothing of her save that she was taller than is the wont of Venetian women.

The entrance gave upon a courtyard—a tank of shadow—enclosed within four or five storeys of building. Here and there a Gothic window, or a coat of arms in stone on the walls, attested their antiquity. But some Badoer of the eighteenth century had begun a scheme of decoration in the taste of that enlightened epoch, and, as a preliminary, had covered the whole with stucco. The decoration had progressed no farther than a few abominable masks when poverty or distaste or death cut short the work; and now the plaster flaked off in patches and crumbled on the slabs of the pavement. The setting sun struck on the upper part of the opposite wall, and lit up its ugliness: the whole aspect of the court was as dismal as a madhouse. In one corner a flight of steps with marble balustrade led to the first floor; a rotting gate closed the great main entrance, giving, I supposed, on a canal; and in the centre of the pavement stood the well-head, carved with figures in the style of the Renaissance. It was executed with more than ordinary skill, and the design at once took hold upon my fancy. Round about the well went a dance of cupids, alternating and hand and hand with skeletons—a fantastic allegory of Love and Death.

While I was staring round the court the girl had passed us, and stood leaning against the well. My eyes, wearied with so much that was hideous, fell upon her with a thrill of pleasure. In that shadowy place she gave the impression of a dim, mellow old picture. She

glowed out of the sombre background like some robust and splendid woman on a canvas of Pordenone. I had believed the type to be extinct in Venice; and I forgot my manners in the contemplation of the woman as she leant against the well-head—the two notes of beauty that emphasised the dreariness of the Ca' Badoer.

"If it please the Signor," said my host at my elbow, "my daughter Marina will show him his apartments." The girl bowed to me upon this informal introduction, and led the way up the steps, and along a dismal empty corridor. She stopped presently, and throwing open a door on either hand disclosed two clean, bare rooms—one a sitting-room looking on a narrow canal, the other a bedroom with a window on the court.

"These are the rooms," she said. "Perhaps the Signor will be so amiable as to discuss all matters of business with me. For my father it is, of course, impossible."

I was indeed to find that she was manager, provider, and financier of the household. For her father it was, as she said, impossible. He and she alike would have recoiled from the idea that the head of the Ca' Badoer should abase himself to discuss questions of payment with his lodger, or to concern himself with the daily exigencies of their narrow finance. For a woman, although a Badoer, it was different. Under the stress of necessity she might do these things. In all my acquaintance with the father, I never knew him occupy himself save in the daily walk to his café; I hardly exchanged ten words with him save on the subject of the weather. He drifted backwards and forwards from his house to the Piazza, an urbane nonentity. Marina stitched and brushed at his slender wardrobe, replenished his shallow purse, took the cares of their life upon her shoulders, that the last head of the great house of Badoer might exist, as became him, like the lilies of the field.

The time passed quietly in my new lodging, and I made great strides with my work. I encountered my hosts only at meal times, when I was treated as an honoured guest. Such conversation as there was passed almost entirely between myself and Marina. She was not unintelligent, and, for a woman of her nation, well read; but an intense reserve seemed to weigh upon her speech. Her eyes scarcely left her father, upon whose every word she waited sedulously. The interests of both father and daughter seemed to centre solely on the former. He was the last of the Badoeri; for these two, it seemed, there existed no other race in the world.

In the social aspect, as may be imagined, my life was dull enough; and, after about a fortnight, I welcomed the advent of another guest. This was the mate of a steamer trading from Zara, who, I found, lodged at the Ca' Badoer when he came to Venice. He was a young Dalmatian, by name Stefano Barich, with a bold and merry eye. During the few days of his stay the whole complexion of our table was changed. He talked freely, with an inextinguishable vivacity; even

the old man seemed to take an interest in his stories, which, indeed, displayed the marks of a lively imagination. Upon myself his society produced an agreeable elation, like a glass of champagne; to poor Marina he must have seemed some brilliant visitor from a happier world.

I never knew how in the first instance he came to lodge at the Ca' Badoer; the reason of his repeated visits was patent to any one less stupid or self-centred than the master of the house. Marina's shy and happy manner when Stefano was there told her part of the story. So, I thought, here is a very pretty romance blossoming in the midst of this old husk of rottenness.

I was at my books all day, the old man at his café, so that there was no restraint upon the intercourse of the lovers. Occasionally I would come upon them together in the court, when Marina would be prettily confused, Stefano proud and radiant. He made no concealment of his sentiments, from me at any rate; indeed, on his second visit after my arrival, he suddenly unburdened himself to me, and asked my opinion of his chances. It seemed that his worldly prospects were bright. He had a little property near Zara, an interest in the ship of which he was mate, and was in a fair way to become captain. One thing was necessary for him—Marina to be mistress of his house, and behold! the perfect life.

I shook my head. "What does Marina say?" said I.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, Signor!" he answered, "you know what they always say." (I disclaimed the knowledge, being an old bachelor.) "There is her father. I say he shall come with us; but that she says he will never do. However, we shall see. What does the Signor think?"

I liked the young fellow: he had been frank with me, it was the duty of a friend to be frank with him.

"Signor Barich," I said, "you forget the Ca' Badoer."

"Oh! the old rats' nest!" he cried. "It is from that dungeon that I would rescue Marina."

"It is a great house," I said, seeing that he did not perceive my drift.

He flushed a little. "I take the Signor's meaning; but my family were great in Zara before the first pile was driven in Venice."

I am sure Stefano would have traced his ancestry to Noah if necessary.

"Well," I said, "I can but counsel hope and wish you all success."

"I thank the Signor," he answered cheerfully. "I will strive to deserve it." And with that ended our talk. It was the last time I had speech with him.

This was upon a Thursday evening; his ship was to sail at daylight on the Saturday. As I lay awake in bed on the Friday morning, I heard drowsily the sound of voices in the courtyard. Presently I made out the voice of Stefano, earnest and voluble; its rapid flow

soothed me like a brook towards a second slumber, when, suddenly, a little choking scream, as of one in a fit, cut short the current of the talk. I was wide awake upon the instant, and springing from my bed, looked into the court.

The morning sun lit up the bleak upper storeys, but shadow stagnated as always at the bottom. Upon the hither side of the well, his back to me, leant Stefano, in an attitude of strenuous pleading; on the farther side stood old Angelo Badoer. His hands rested upon the well-head; his body appeared rigid; and his eyes stared wide before him in a blank and intolerable amazement. In the dim green shadow his white face and hair looked like a marble head of Panic, that had grown discoloured in a corner of some damp, neglected garden.

Stefano had ceased at the sound of that piteous ejaculation.

"Are you ill, Signor?" he asked.

The old man seemed to articulate with difficulty. "I do not understand," he said very slowly. It seemed as though his feeble intellect strove to grasp the inconceivable.

Stefano was silent for a space. Then he spoke, very distinctly and deliberately—

"Signor Badoer, I have the honour to ask for your daughter in marriage."

There was no reply. The white mask continued to stare at him without the twitching of a muscle.

Stefano shifted his position by the well, and spoke again.

"You may think, Signor," he said, "that this is presumption on my part, being but a stranger, and the mate of a merchantman. But, indeed, it is not so. My family was great in Zara——"

Upon the word, the old man seemed suddenly to flame from death into life. The pale face flushed dark with fury, the corded veins stood out upon his temples, his hands gripped the coping of the well-head. He spoke in a hoarse, muffled voice, each word seeming uprooted from his heart by a supreme and seismic anger.

"You have said it," he cried, craning forward towards the other across the well. "You have said it. That I should live to hear, in my own house, a daughter of the Badoer asked in marriage by a Schiavone! Listen, dog of a slave! We of the Badoer made your fathers dig for us, row our galleys for us, cut wood for us in their country, which was our country. And the son of the slaves would ally his blood with the Badoer! Truly we are fallen, we Badoer, and I am an old man; but——"

Stefano had shrunk back at first from what seemed a resurrection, the reanimation of a corpse. The sudden fury of this faint, colourless shadow of mankind was terrible. But with the insult Stefano in turn was stung to anger. He seemed to lose all control over himself, and to shake with rage like a leaf in the wind.

"That is enough!" he screamed. "That is enough, old canal-rat! You rely upon your age to protect you. You do well. But hear me

swear this: by St. George and St. Trifonio I will carry off my wife in spite of you or all the Badoer, dead or alive." He snapped his fingers under the other's nose.

The old man staggered backwards, as I thought, the subject of some seizure, and I was about to intervene, when he suddenly straightened himself on his feet, and relapsed into his ordinary composure. The transition was so rapid, so unexpected, that the scene I had just witnessed seemed incredible. The frost of stony astonishment, the tempest of impotent rage had swept over him in a few moments, and wrought no change in that bland, insignificant exterior. Stefano's wrath had cooled evidently also at the phenomenon.

The old man bowed stiffly to the young one. He spoke in a low gentle voice, purged of every trace of anger.

"I think, Signor," he said, "we both forget the relation in which we stand—I the host, and you the guest. Let us, if you please, postpone the discussion to a more fitting opportunity."

Stefano bowed ceremoniously and passed out at the gate. The old gentleman shuffled feebly up the steps and into the house.

Here, then, was an enigma. I was prepared to hear that this seemingly witless old man held an exaggerated opinion of the greatness of his family; for such a display of concentrated fury in so fragile a vessel I was not. But the most astonishing circumstance was his sudden return to his usual urbanity. It disclosed a self-control peculiarly disconcerting—the self-control of a piece of machinery. The most violent emotion had no more lasting effect upon this creature than a jet of steam upon a piston. Then, again, his implied willingness to discuss the question further—it could not be possible, after what had passed between the two. Could it be the relenting of a weak intelligence? No. That sort of mind balances long and painfully upon the turning-point. Besides, the mechanism which I had just seen in action could have no bowels for relenting. At any rate it seemed to me that, whatever might be the explanation, what I had seen augured ill for the affairs of Stefano and Marina.

At the midday meal the old man was mild and silent as usual. Stefano did not appear, fearing, perhaps, the awkwardness of the meeting. To Marina's inquiries we pleaded ignorance. She evidently had no knowledge of the quarrel between Stefano and her father; and, to all appearance, the memory of it was effaced from the mind of the latter. He seemed as peaceful and unruffled as the surface of the lagoon.

In the afternoon, while strolling in the neighbourhood of the docks, my eye was caught by a figure that came out of one of those shops where are sold ship's stores, rope and the like. At a distance it seemed in a way familiar to me, and yet I could not identify it. The man turned presently into a narrow lane, and, as he was lost to sight, it flashed upon me that it was Angelo Badoer, but walking with so vigorous a step that I had not at first recognised him. I noticed



that he carried a bulky parcel under his arm. I was surprised at the time, but the matter slipped out of my memory.

At dinner, we were the same party of three; but Marina made no inquiries for the absentee. She had been crying, and I could see by the looks of fear that she cast at her father that she must have had the story from Stefano. To my surprise, towards the end of the meal, the old man suddenly broke silence with the announcement that he had seen Signor Barich in the afternoon, who had asked him to express his sorrow that his business would prevent him coming to dinner, and to convey his farewells to Marina and myself. Marina said nothing, and I murmured some commonplaces of regret; and after dinner the old gentleman took his hat, saying that he was to meet a friend at the café.

It must, as I should judge, have been about midnight, when, happening to awake, I heard low voices in the courtyard. Being full of sleep, the improbability of robbers in that house did not occur to me, and I jumped out of bed with the idea of catching the thieves; when, in the gloom, I recognised Old Badoer and Stefano, apparently in the most amicable conversation. As I looked out, I heard the old man say, "Hush! we must not wake Marina!" and, laying his hand affectionately on Stefano's shoulder, he led him up the stairs and into the house. The action was so friendly, that I could not but believe that he had repented of his words of the morning; and, by this secrecy, was perhaps to impose some test upon the devotion of the lovers. I put myself to sleep again with imaginings of their happiness.

The cold light of dawn overflowed into the dark court when I awoke again very suddenly and painfully. There still rang in my ears the most hideous moaning wail, which seemed to have issued from the floor of the courtyard, and to have torn me shuddering from my sleep. I could hardly be mistaken—so piercing a sound could be no legacy of nightmare, no imagining of unwholesome slumber. Half doubting still, I looked out of the window, and saw at once, in Marina's horror-stricken face at an opposite window, the confirmation of my belief.

"Did you hear it, Signor?" she cried.

"Yes," I said, "it seemed to come from the courtyard."

"From the well," she answered with a shiver.

The girl's terror and the strangeness of the sound infected me with superstitious fear; but I felt the need of reassuring her, and fortunately an explanation occurred to me.

"It is some steamer at the docks," I said. The idea at least reassured myself. Just then I caught sight of the father at another window. His face was drawn and set in a stony stare, as I had seen it yesterday morning.

"Assuredly," he said very slowly, pausing as for breath between each word, "it—is—some—steamer—at—the—docks."

Marina did not hear him; her eyes were fixed upon the well.

"Stefano's ship sails at daylight," she said. "But the sound was from the well."

The father turned upon her in a childish anger.

"It was not!" he piped shrilly. "And this is not the hour for my daughter to speak with a stranger in the court." With that he slammed-to his window, and it seemed best for me to do the same.

It was tolerably plain, I thought, that he did not accept my suggestion of the steamer; and equally clear, from his agonised expression, that he held in his mind some less comfortable hypothesis. Could it be that we had happened upon a skeleton of the Badoer cupboard—some haunting of the old house, unknown even to the daughter? If that were so, I hoped to lay the ghost by the simple explanation of a steamship's whistle. This solution seemed more and more probable as daylight broadened; and I fell again calmly to my disturbed slumbers.

On the morrow the household resumed its usual routine. I forgot, in my work, the terror of the night; and as there was no recurrence of the fearful sound, I had no opportunity of verifying my theory. Marina, indeed, was silent and preoccupied; a circumstance which I attributed in part to the fright she had experienced, but more to the absence of her lover, and what he had told her of his interview with her father. I was somewhat surprised that my host made no reference to his midnight meeting with Stefano; but he was never communicative, and I reflected that in this case his silence might be connected with the test imposed upon his daughter and son-in-law elect. So it came about that the matter passed out of my mind until, on the Saturday following, I was awakened upon the break of day by the same appalling sound I had heard a week ago.

The theory of a steamer's siren was of small import to me now. The sound surged upwards and filled the darkness of the courtyard like the welling up of a fountain. It echoed and reverberated between the walls like a cry along a vaulted passage. There was a quality in it human, horrible, agonised beyond expression. If this were the siren of a steamer, it was, indeed, a strange effect of acoustics. No steamer that ever sailed the sea gave forth so hideous a sound.

I crept fearfully to the window and looked out. The morning twilight gloomed in the court; and, from the opposite window, Marina's face stared, like a stone Medusa, at the black aperture of the well. I must have watched her for fully five minutes, when she passed her hand over her eyes, and disappeared into her room. Her father made no sign of having heard.

As I have said, my theory of the steamer's whistle was rudely shaken; nor, with the return of daylight, did it recommend itself to me. It was at the well that the girl stared spell-bound; from the well had come that wail of anguish that filled the old house with horror.

Another week passed, and upon the Saturday morning the terrible sound recurred. Marina faded and drooped before my eyes like an unwatered lily in the sun. The father did not seem to see it; and at times I was minded to speak to him, and ask the reason of this

thing which blighted his daughter's life. That he knew something of it I was sure, but that he would tell me I doubted; and when I looked at him, the idea seemed more hopeless than interrogating a child. I determined to explore the house for myself.

I set out along the passage upon which my room opened, and passing the entrance to the court, turned to the left into another passage. It seemed that the corridor ran round the four sides of the quadrangle. This portion into which I was now come was all in darkness, being without windows, and the doors on each side of it close shut. As I groped forwards in the gloom, my foot stumbled over an object on the floor. I stooped, and felt a coiled mass of rope and woodwork; and carrying it back to where the light filtered in from the entrance, saw it to be a new rope-ladder, such as is used upon the sides of ships.

It was no business of mine; but I stood there wondering what they could want with such a thing in that house; and, as I stood, old Badoer came softly out of the dark behind me.

"The Signor desires?" said he.

"Nothing, Signor," I replied in some confusion.

"The Signor's rooms are that way," he answered, indicating the direction with his hand. "Permit me to disembarass him of my rope-ladder, which I fear incommodes him." And with a bow of dismissal, he shuffled back into the darkness.

I felt the rebuke well merited; I had been spying in the house that sheltered me, and had been told of my offence pretty plainly. But—I turned it over and over in my mind—what use had that old gentleman for a rope-ladder?

Marina grew each day more silent and depressed. I no longer heard her singing in the house. She went listlessly about her affairs; and I often found her moping in the courtyard. The well seemed to exercise upon her a fearful attraction; she spent hours leaning upon the coping, and staring into the dark hollow, as if watching for a revelation of the mystery. Melancholy held her with an unrelaxing grip.

In the fourth week from Stefano's disappearance I encountered a stranger in the courtyard, who was obviously a seaman, ill at ease in his shore-going clothes. He asked for Signor Badoer; and, upon the moment, Marina and her father came down the stairs. The sailor blundered at once into his story, speaking in a rough patois. It appeared that he was the master of the *Lussin*, Stefano's ship. Upon their last departure from Venice his mate had not appeared. He, supposing that Stefano had missed the ship—he had done so himself before now, he said, with a foolish chuckle—had expected him by every ship from Venice. Ah well! Stefano had not appeared, therefore he came to Signor Badoer, with whom Stefano had lodged, to know if he had any news of his mate. The fellow's manner told as plainly as could be that no news to him was good news; he had no wish to be superseded in his command.

Signor Badoer was for once communicative. Certainly he had seen Signor Barich on the night of his disappearance. They had met at the café, and afterwards had come home together, that Signor Barich might take away his luggage. That would be about midnight. I corroborated the statement, having seen them from my window. The old man looked at me for a moment, I thought, with something like consternation; then, recovering himself, suggested that the Captain should apply to the police. He trusted that Signor Barich was not fallen into the canal, the poor little one.

Marina kept silent throughout the interview; for all sign she gave of intelligence, she might have been deaf as a stone. The news of her lover's disappearance affected her not at all; she seemed wrapped in a fatal and premature despair, as though from the hour of their parting she had counted him with the dead. Unless, indeed, she knew of his whereabouts? But the poor thing's pale and woebegone face silenced that supposition. Melancholy was fallen upon her life like a pall; madness threatened, if it had not already laid hold upon her.

On the following day a police official arrived and received Signor Badoer's and my statements. He was a monosyllabic person of imposing appearance, inspiring one with a confidence that his investigations would be fruitless—as was indeed the case.

As the days passed, each week bringing that recurrent horror, Marina sank deeper in the slough of melancholia. She was utterly silent, and even the mechanical intelligence necessary for her household duties began to fail. It was piteous to see the poor creature leaning constantly on the well-head, with dry, set eyes, unconscious of anything but an overwhelming misery. The old man did not seem to see anything unusual. He had fallen again into his old silent, self-centred habits; he made no allusion to the disappearance of Stefano, and it seemed that the matter was gone completely from his mind.

The girl's case was indeed become deplorable. Father and daughter seemed utterly alone in the world; but it hardly seemed fitting that I, a stranger, should point out to the old man his daughter's malady. I had, however, resolved on doing so, when one day Signor Badoer asked to speak with me privately. I had no doubt remarked, he said, the affliction that had fallen upon his daughter, which would, he feared, prevent her carrying on the household as heretofore. Under the circumstances, with much regret, he must ask me to seek a lodging elsewhere.

My heart was wrung with pity for these lonely helpless people; and I earnestly offered him whatever assistance might be in my power. The old man shook his head sadly.

"I thank the Signor," he said, "but we need nothing but to be left with our sorrow."

There was no more to be said. Accordingly I made arrangements to remove at once to an hotel; and soon afterwards, being called away from Venice, father and daughter passed entirely out of my life.

I did not return to Venice for some three years; and during that time a hundred activities kept my thoughts from the tragedy of the Ca' Badoer. On the second day of my return (a Saturday, by the way) I had wandered in my gondola outside the Giudecca, and we were just turning into the Canale di Fusina, when I perceived a small steamer making seawards from the docks. Her siren shrieked to some market-boats that were scattered in the channel. As she neared us I saw that she flew the Austrian ensign, and read upon her bow the name *Lussin*.

The sight of Stefano's ship brought back to my mind the mystery of his disappearance, and the desire to know the solution of it, and the fate of the father and daughter. I turned to my gondolier, and asked if he knew the Palazzo Badoer.

Certainly he did. It was there his cousin lived—a gondolier like himself. The Signor looked surprised—ah, perhaps he had known the Badoeri? The house was now let in tenements, and the ancient family was no more. The old man had left Venice, disappeared no one knew whither; as for his daughter, the poor little one—he pointed to S. Clemente, where the gaunt asylum stands upon the Isle, and the cries of the mad women float out upon the lagoon. Here was an ending for that great house; the last of its women among the pauper lunatics, its last head, a frail old wreck, lost somewhere in the ocean of the world. A great sadness held me as my gondola grated against the steps of the Ca' Badoer, for nowadays the main entrance stood open to the coming and going of many feet.

My gondolier disappeared into the court, and presently returned with his cousin, who was pressing that I should drink a bottle of wine with him. I accepted readily enough in the hope of hearing more of the fate of the late occupants of the house. And now I tapped a fount of information in the person of my host's wife, who, on hearing that I had been a friend of the family, received me with enthusiasm.

And had I indeed known the Badoeri, she said—the poor little mad one and the old man accursed, and the young stranger who was murdered? And had I heard the spirit of the murdered man shrieking for vengeance?

I told her of the terrible sound that recurred week by week. She turned in triumph to her husband.

"You hear, Tonio Ponte?" she said. "Perhaps even now you will say that it was the steamers at the docks?"

The man smiled sceptically. "Indeed I do, Zianetta Fasan," he replied, "for neither you, nor the priests, nor even the Signor here will make me believe that dead men cry aloud. But he has not yet heard the story."

It appeared that soon after my leaving the Ca' Badoer, Marina, whose melancholy developed (as I foresaw) into madness, was taken to S. Clemente; and thereupon her father, being now entirely alone, sold the house and left Venice, wandering out into the world a

pathetic and hopeless figure. He had not since been heard of. For some time the place had stood empty. An evil reputation attached to it, for somehow the report got about of an unearthly wailing—doubtless of some devil—which filled the house now and again, and made it accursed. About a year ago, however, a speculator had bought it for a song, with the intention of letting it in tenements. He had made little alteration in the shabby old building, save to remove the well-head for sale, and fill in the well, which was already half-choked. While engaged on this the workmen found, at about twenty feet from the surface, a little chamber or hollow in the wall concealed from the top by a projection of the stonework. In this they discovered the skeleton of a man, and some metal buttons with an anchor upon them, such as are worn by officers of merchantmen. This, said my informant, was without doubt the body of Stefano Barich.

"And how," said the husband, "did the body come there? Will your murderers have flown down with it?"

His wife looked at him contemptuously. "And how, pray," she said, "did the workmen come there unless by a rope-ladder, as any fool might know."

The man shrugged his shoulders; but the words brought home a horrible certainty to my mind. I recollected in a flash the vision of old Badoer at the rope shop, and the ladder I had stumbled upon in the dark passage. It was plain that the old man had made away with Stefano. The latter's threat to carry off Marina had been his sentence of death. He had touched the one spring that moved the old dotard, and moved him to terrible purpose. Rather than this dishonour to his race should be done, Angelo Badoer had laid violent hands upon his passion and subdued it; had made a pretence to his victim of favouring his suit; had brought him home with a devilish travesty of hospitality, and there put him to death in some secret manner—probably by poison. All this I could understand; I had seen him curb his rage with sudden and appalling resolution; I could imagine with what rank luxuriance his one fixed idea had flourished in the vacant spaces of his brain. That it should have had such power over the bodily tissues as to enable that fragile old creature to descend the well carrying the dead man, passed belief. But to one who knew Angelo Badoer the mere notion of an accomplice was yet more incredible.

"And as for the wailing," said the gondolier's wife, as she brought her story to an end, "it is certain that it could not have come from the steamers, for it ceased after the poor little one's body was buried."

"For all that," replied the sceptic, as he helped me to another glass of wine, "the filling up of the well may have had something to do with it."

GERALD YEO.



## THE EVOLUTION OF THE MACHINE GUN

NEARLY six years ago, soon after the close of the Matabele war, a newspaper correspondent, who had been with the British force, wrote home that every Matabele warrior who had been spoken to had the same story, namely, that they did not mind the rifle fire, for they had Martinis themselves and could reply, but what cowed them and prevented them from closing in on the laager was the fire of the Maxim gun, which they called the "zi-go-go-go"—a fairly expressive name.

The Maxim gun, which has proved so useful an ally to the British on many African battlefields, is the latest development of an idea which originated with the first rude attempt at the construction of a revolver. The revolver and the machine gun are now very different weapons, but in the earlier days of their history it is difficult sometimes to tell to which kind of arm reference is made.

The invention of repeating firearms is a subject of frequent allusion in seventeenth-century books. We read of pistols and muskets and arquebuses all being constructed with several barrels, on the principle of obtaining repeated discharges with only one loading; for in those days, as for long generations afterwards, it was the time spent in loading which heavily handicapped the effectiveness of firearms. Mr. Pepys has two references of this kind. On 3rd July 1662 he dined with the officers of the Ordnance, and after dinner the company inspected "a gun to discharge seven times; the best of all devices that ever I saw, and very serviceable, and not a bawble; for it is much approved of, and many thereof made." And again on 4th March 1664 he remarks: "There were several people trying a new-fashion gun brought my Lord Peterborough this morning, to shoot off often, one after another, without trouble or danger." Both these weapons were probably of the revolver of several-barrelled musket type. Such devices must have been fairly common. Samuel Butler, in his prose writings, alludes more than once to them. In his character of "A Swearer" he says that he discharges oaths "as fast as a gun, that will shoot nine times with one loading"; and again, in describing "An Haranguer," he says, "When you think he has done he falls on, and lets fly again, like a Gun that will discharge nine Times with one Loading."

There were several inventors, foreign as well as English, at work about the same time on repeating weapons. Letters-patent were granted by Louis XIII. of France to an armourer named Celthoff in

1650 for the invention of muskets, arquebuses, and pistols which could be fired eight or ten times at one loading, and which were said to be no heavier nor longer, nor in any way less convenient than those which the soldiers were accustomed to handle. In an English news-sheet of a little later date, the *Mercurius Politicus* for the week ending 5th November 1657, there is information from Copenhagen, that the King of Denmark had ordered there his lifeguard of 160 dragoons, who were armed with "a sort of new invented Guns, which being but once charged, will discharge many times one after another." This, apparently, was some kind of repeating carbine.

In the arsenal at Vienna there is said to be a machine, dated 1678, by which fifty muskets could be discharged in any direction or at any angle by the application of a single match. This seems to be the earliest approach on record to a machine gun as distinguished from a pistol or musket of the revolver type. Something similar was invented, but evidently in a very rough kind of way, a few years later in this country. Oldmixon, the early historian of the Stuarts, who wrote not long after the events he described, says, when referring to the intended defence of Bridgewater by the revolted Duke of Monmouth in July 1685: "One Silver, an Inhabitant of the Place, Brother to Captain Silver, Master-Gunner of England, invented a machine, which would discharge many Barrels of Musquets at once. These were to be play'd at several *passes* instead of Cannon; but the Noise of Great Guns, and the Terror of Bombs, soon oblig'd the Duke to concert other methods." The reasons given for not using Silver's machine are not very intelligible; but the device itself was a distinct step forward in the evolution of the machine gun.

The idea of welding a number of barrels together was the germ of what has since been so fully developed. Early in the eighteenth century the French army possessed guns of this kind. Among the cannon captured by Marlborough and the Allies at Ramillies in 1706, were several pieces described by an old French historian as made with three tubes, which could be discharged with one loading. A triple cannon of this kind, with three bell-mouthed barrels welded together, dating from the time of Louis XIV., is said to be preserved in the arsenal at Rochefort. The bell-mouth to each of the barrels was no doubt intended to scatter the grape or canister with which it might be charged.

The first hint of any mechanical contrivance for the discharge of a many-barrelled gun is found in the "Diary" of Narcissus Luttrell, under date 8th January 1689-90. He describes the preparations for the expedition to Ireland to meet the forces of James II. as proceeding vigorously. "The Tower," he continues, "is ordered to gett ready 15,000 new musquets, 5000 pikes . . . as also four of the new invented wheel engines, which discharge 150 musquet barrells at once, and turning the wheel as many more; they are very serviceable to guard a *passe*." A gun which could discharge 300 balls at two turns, so

to speak, was not a weapon to be despised. It is surprising, indeed, that more is not known of this "wheel engine."

The best-known name in connection with these early attempts at machine guns is that of James Puckle. He brought his invention before the public in the year of bubble undertakings, 1720; and a company was duly formed, called "Puckle's Machine Company," for the manufacture and sale of the new invention "for discharging round and square cannon-balls and bullets, and making a total revolution in the art of war." A satirical print of the period called it

"A rare invention to Destroy the Crowd  
Of Fools at home instead of Foes abroad.  
Fear not, my Friends, this Terrible Machine—  
They're only wounded that have shares therein."

Mr. J. Eliot Hodgkin, a well-known collector, has placed on record a valuable description of Puckle's machine, obtained from a very rare engraved broadside of about 1720, which is headed—

"A DEFENCE.

Defending King George your Country and Lawes  
Is Defending Yourselfs and Protestant Cause.  
Invented by Mr. James Puckle  
For Bridges, Breaches, Lines and Passes,  
Ships, Boats, Houses, and other Places."

"The engraving," says Mr. Hodgkin, "shows a large revolver, or mitrailleuse, on a tripod, the breech of which is turned by hand and contains six chambers, the contents of which are discharged in turn through a single long barrel. The tripod possesses an elevating arrangement, and the piece can be swivelled in any desired direction. The part containing the chambers is removable at pleasure, and when one 'sett' had been discharged, a charged one was substituted. One set is depicted as intended for a 'ship shooting Round Bullets against Christians'; a second is for one 'shooting square Bullets against Turks.' The machine was also devised to 'discharge Granado Shells.'" The careful provision of round shot for Christians and square for the infidel Turks is decidedly curious. Mr. James Puckle was evidently a thoughtful and considerate person.

What became of the Company founded in 1720 we do not know. It probably came to grief, as the great majority of the companies founded in that year did. But the gun is heard of again two years later. In the *Daily Post* of 16th March 1722, there was a notice that Mr. Puckle's machine would be publicly discharged on Wednesday the 25th March in the Artillery Ground, between the hours of 4 and 5 in the afternoon; and in the *London Journal* of the 31st of the same month, it was recorded that the programme was duly carried out as advertised, that it was "reported for certain that one man discharged it 63 times in seven Minutes though all the time Raining; and that it

throws off either one large or 16 Musket Bullets at every discharge with great force." The machine, however, never seems to have come into use, or to have been adopted for practical military purposes.

It is a long step from Mr. James Puckle to Dr. Gatling, the next name of any importance in this connection. Dr. Richard Jordan Gatling was born near Murfreesboro', North Carolina, in September 1818. His first inventions were of a peaceful kind—a steam-plough, and a cotton-seed sowing machine, which proved very profitable. Then in 1861 he invented the revolving gun which has made his name so familiar on both sides of the Atlantic. Gatling guns were first used, though not very extensively, in the American Civil War of 1861-1865; and there were but very few of them in our own military service until the seventies were well advanced. In the meantime the Franco-German War had brought the mitrailleuse into notoriety. This weapon, however, which was so much vaunted by the French, did not by any means fulfil the expectations which had been formed regarding its powers of destruction. To the mitrailleuse and the Gatling have succeeded the Nordenfeldt, the Gardner, Hotchkiss, and Maxim machine guns of terribly destructive power—veritable engines of death, of which the action has become more and more familiar in recent years.

G. L. APPERSON.

#### SONNET

AS mist along the verdant valley steals,  
 And veils the view of fertile fields from sight—  
 As gathering dark the moon's soft ray conceals,  
 And distant stars are lost in shades of night—  
 As silent streams lie deep beneath the hill,  
 Nor storms nor summer suns can set them free—  
 As seed in earth lies buried cold and still—  
 As buds unclose when there are none to see—  
 So in the heart lie hidden, fold on fold,  
 Thoughts deep and sweet, but never breathed—untold  
 Even to those its pulses hold most dear.  
 The depths are never sounded—none may know  
 What hoards of treasure moulder there below;  
 The doors are closed—gates barred—as if in fear.

C. E. MEETKERKE.

## OXFORD AND HER COLLEGES

### III. ST. JOHN'S

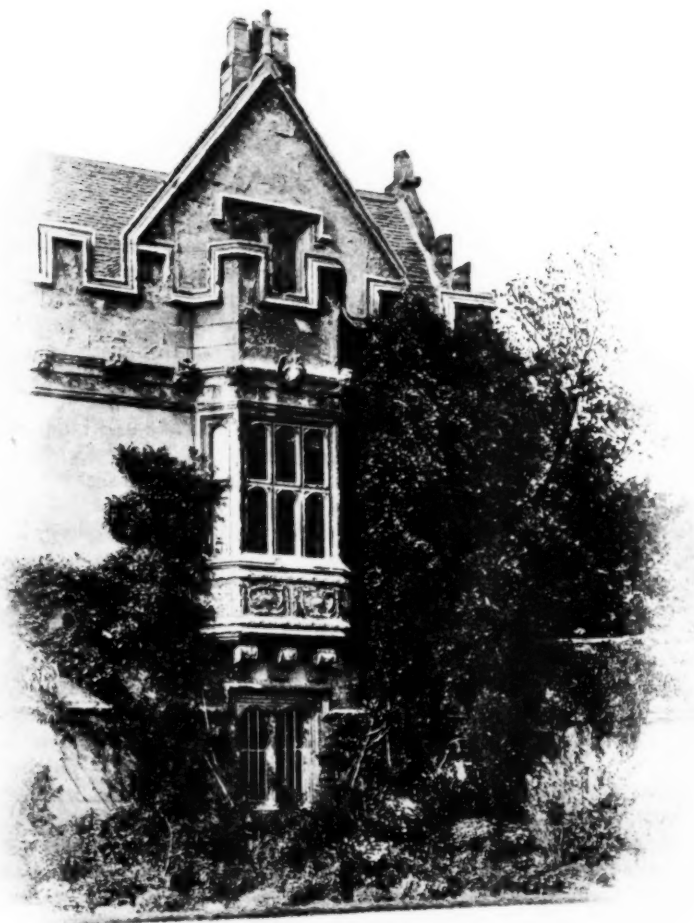
By E. IRVING CARLYLE

THOSE who visit an Oxford College cannot fail to remark the evidences of the past in all its institutions and customs. They, however, can hardly realise by a brief inspection how strongly the influence of antiquity is felt. New modes of thought and expression constantly succeed one another, but the social life of the place goes on unchanged in its essence from one generation to another. The same pleasant mingling of study and recreation, the same sharpening of wits against each other, the same happy disregard for what the rest of the world may be thinking or doing, exists to day that existed three hundred years ago. While the growth of town life and the increased ease of communication have transformed the rest of England within a century, Oxford remains much the same as ever to the eye that can see clearly the essential characteristics of the place.

These reflections have no special relation to St. John's College, but it is only after gaining an apprehension of this common characteristic of the whole University that it is possible to proceed to discuss the environment of a particular College. Moreover, to one like the writer, who has been an exile for five years from the city of his affections, the subtler shades tend to grow dim, while the glamour of the whole takes firmer possession of the memory. If antiquity were the measure of rank in academical matters, then St. John's College must be contented with a humble place among university foundations. The fabulous glories of University College, who rejoice to consider Alfred as their founder, are said to have scandalised an eminent historian by their incompatibility with historic truth. The annals of St. John's could not have aroused his indignation from a similar cause. The order of events in that College belongs to the strictly historic period, and though the members may covet at times the decent shroud of antiquity, they may find consolation in the fact that their records are interrupted by no period of legend or myth.

Many of the present buildings are anterior in point of time to the foundation of the College. From their first erection, however, they were devoted to piety and learning. Originally they formed part of a Bernardine house founded by Archbishop Chichele in 1437, as a place where the Cistercian scholars "might obtain humane and heavenly knowledge." The first buildings consisted only of part of the present college front, which looks westward on St. Giles, and of a southern

wing running parallel to the buildings of Balliol. The Hall, which was built about 1502, and the Chapel, which was consecrated in 1530, form



ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE : KING CHARLES'S WINDOW.

a corresponding wing on the north side. Only nine years, however, after the consecration of the Chapel, disaster befell the monastery; the serious differences which arose between Henry VIII. and the Pope



brought about the wholesale dissolution of the monasteries. The College erected "to the honour of the most glorious Virgin Mary and St. Bernard" shared the common fate, and the only reminiscence of their patron saint left to the College was his statue, which still stands over the great gate of entrance. The lands, building, and revenues were bestowed on Wolsey's gigantic foundation of Christ Church, which at that time quite overshadowed the rest of the University, and threatened to absorb into itself at once the learning and the possessions of the other Colleges. In this undignified condition of dependence the embryo College remained for some sixteen years, until it was restored to an independent existence by private munificence.

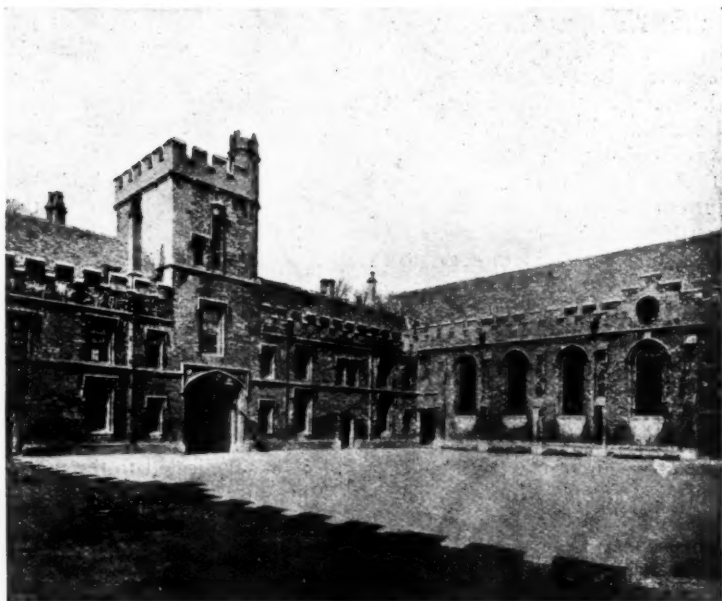
The founder of the College was a prosperous London citizen, Sir Thomas White, a member of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors. In the year of Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion he had filled the office of Lord Mayor, and had valiantly rallied the citizens of London to the cause of Queen Mary. During his whole career he was a distinguished patron of learning. In the words of Joseph Taylor, the oldest College historian, after pouring over England a torrent of munificence, he resolved on the accomplishment of the worthiest among many things in which he deserved well of the State. In a dream he was directed to found a College hard by where three trunks grew from the root of a single elm. After diligent inquiry, he found the sign which he sought in Oxford, on the east side of St. Giles Street, and the tree which decided him to purchase the buildings of St. Bernard was still standing one hundred and fifty years later in the garden of the College President.

In 1555 the College was refounded under letters patent of Philip and Mary, and was set apart for the study of the sciences of Sacred Theology, Philosophy, and Good Arts. It was dedicated to the praise and honour of God, of the Blessed Virgin Mary His Mother, and St. John the Baptist. The governing body of the new society consisted of a president and thirty graduate or non-graduate scholars. The regulation of College affairs, however, was soon confined to the seniors alone, although even at the time of Laud's election there were traces of the existence of a wider franchise. Indeed, at the present day it is still a tradition among the non-graduate scholars that they, as well as the Fellows, ought to have a voice in College matters, and that they are debarred from their privileges by a shameful usurpation. Although this belief seems destined to remain a shadow, it occasionally serves as a theme for undergraduate eloquence, and thus serves as solace for any temporary discontent among the junior-members of the foundation.

From the time that Sir Thomas White completed the first quadrangle, no important additions were made to the College until near the middle of the seventeenth century. White impoverished himself by his charities, and on his death left the College poor. Moreover, from the earliest period of its history, St. John's has showed itself pre-eminent, even in Oxford, as the home of lost causes. It has been in turn Roman

Catholic, Prelatical, Cavalier, Jacobite, and Evangelical (to say nothing of more recent enthusiasms), at a time when the principles it espoused were above all things unprofitable. In the sixteenth century it opposed the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Queen, just as in the present century it resisted the passage of the Great Western Railway through Oxford, from a profound distrust of novelty and a real affection for the past.

The results of this attitude in the time of Elizabeth were the deprivation of two Presidents for asserting the Pope's supremacy, and the emigration of numerous Fellows of the Roman party. One of them, the brilliant Jesuit Edmond Campion, was hanged at Tyburn as a



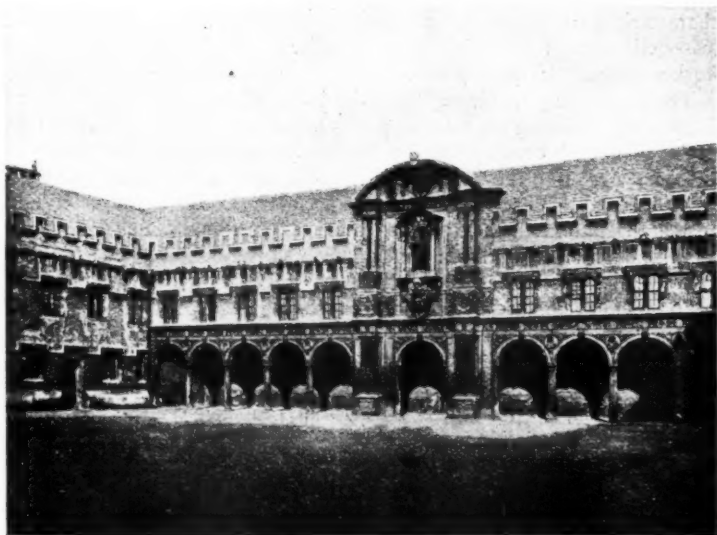
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE: FRONT QUADRANGLE.

conspirator. The time of trial did not end until well on in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when the College took the lead in the High Church reaction against Calvinist doctrines.

With this revival William Laud is inseparably connected, and to him the College owes so much in connection with its revival that he is frequently styled the second founder. He was elected President in 1611 after a bitter contest, in which feeling ran so high that the voting papers were snatched from the altar by one of the Fellows and torn to pieces. The dispute was referred to King James, who confirmed Laud's election, sagely remarking that "the election was no further corrupt and partial than all elections are liable to be"; and those who

have read Mark Pattison's reminiscences will agree that the royal opinion might be justified from subsequent university episodes.

To Laud the College owed the completion of the inner quadrangle usually known as the Canterbury Building. The old Library on the south side had been finished in 1596, but the remaining three sides were Laud's gift to the College. The first stone was laid in 1631 when he was Bishop of London, and in 1636 after he had become Archbishop of Canterbury; the completion of the quadrangle was celebrated by a royal inauguration. Charles I. inspected the new buildings on 29th April, and his two nephews, the Elector Palatine and Prince Rupert, were entered as members of the College. The inner quadrangle has



ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE: INNER QUADRANGLE.

long been considered one of the architectural glories of Oxford. For two centuries architects and historians have concurred in ascribing its design to Inigo Jones. The tradition may be well founded, but to the present no authoritative testimony in its favour has been adduced. The buildings are an example in their general outline of the revived Gothic style, which, according to Freeman, accompanied the revival of Catholic doctrine in the English Church. Two sides of the quadrangle are formed by colonnades decorated on a defined scheme to represent "True Religion" and "Sound Learning." On the west are figures denoting Religion, Charity, Hope, Faith, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, and Truth, while on the east are representations of Astronomy, Architecture, Music, Poetry, Mathematics, Philosophy, Rhetoric, Litera-

ture. The building is generally of stone taken from the quarries at the neighbouring village of Headington, the surface of which readily blackens and peels, giving an air of antiquity that is almost deceptive. The stone, however, is fairly durable. In proof of this it may be mentioned that when in 1887 part of the parapet of the old Library fell during a heavy snowstorm, and other parts of the buildings were found in need of repair, Mr. J. J. Stevenson, the architect who carried out the restoration, was able to employ similar stone, which the restorer of All Saints' Church in the city had removed from the building under the erroneous impression that it had become rotten. By a strict adhesion to the spirit of the original work—too rare among architects—Mr. Stevenson avoided the appearance of novelty which generally characterises "restored" buildings, while the employment of the seasoned stone from All Saints' rendered the actual traces of the workmen almost imperceptible.

The Canterbury quadrangle was the latest addition of importance to the College buildings until the present century. The chief erection in the eighteenth century was the President's stables, built, according to Nicholas Amhurst, the bitter satirist of College shortcomings, because Dr. Delaune, the President, expected to marry a rich widow. When he was disappointed, they long lay unused. Although such an edifice was rather interesting than important, it was the only addition for very many years. As late as 1881, however, one side of a new quadrangle was erected facing westward, between the President's garden and St. Giles's Street. The quadrangle is still unfinished, although the increasing number of undergraduates renders its completion more desirable every year. The open space between the new buildings and the chapel has been selected by tutorial prudence as the best place for bonfires on occasions of collegiate rejoicing, on account of its not being surrounded by buildings. The undergraduate, however, has always shown a preference for the front quadrangle. He has one very sound reason for his choice—the front quadrangle contains the greatest number of inhabited rooms, whence it is easy to obtain fuel.

Memories of the Stuart dynasty form so large a part of the traditions of St. John's, that it is desirable to make some reference to them. A venerable college fable asserts that Charles I. resided during the siege of Oxford in a large suite of rooms to the north of Laud's library. This is, however, utterly fictitious. After the famous visit of Charles in 1636 he had little connection with the College. The apartments which are generally known as King Charles's rooms may possibly have been used as withdrawing chambers when the King opened the Library. Until recently their oak panels were painted yellow and blue; a return to comparative sanity has removed these adornments. But although Charles was not actually resident within its walls, there can be no doubt of the strenuous loyalty of the College, both during the Civil War and afterwards. The President and Fellows devoted the greater part of

the College plate to the royal cause. Modern gossip asserts that the remainder was secretly buried in the President's garden at the time of the Commonwealth to preserve it from confiscation. The only pieces of plate now surviving of greater antiquity than the Civil War are some sacramental vessels of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. In the war itself St. John's bore no special part, the chief memorial of it being a cannon-ball from the 'besiegers' batteries which lodged in the gateway tower. The greater part of the Fellows, as well as Dr. Baylie, the President, were expelled by the Parliamentary Visitors, only to return joyfully at the Restoration. In the time of the first and second Georges attachment to the Stuarts was equally strong. Dr. Delaune, the President, preached loyalty from the pulpit, thundering forth the words, "*Restoreth* all things," so that none should doubt the restoration that he looked for; while another preacher gave out as his text, "James the Third and Eighth," frequently reiterating it with evident zest. At the present day the King Charles Club holds the memory of the royal martyr in the highest respect, and when the day of assembly happens to fall on the fatal 30th of January, the portrait of Charles I., which hangs behind the President's chair, is generally adorned with black hangings.

Undergraduates' reminiscences perhaps gather most thickly about the Chapel and Hall, the two common places of meeting during the day. The Hall, like those of other Colleges, contains numerous portraits, including those of the founder, Laud, and Juxon. Over the chimney-piece is a painting in marble of St. John the Baptist, from Raphael's picture of St. John preaching, presented in 1759 by a Fellow on his return from a tour in Italy. On Shrove Tuesday the College fare is supplemented by capons and pancakes, the benefaction of Mrs. Holmes, wife of a former President.

The Chapel is the resting-place of Laud, whose remains were removed there after the Restoration. There also is buried Bishop Juxon, who attended Charles on the scaffold, and to whom was addressed that monarch's "Remember," an injunction which has given rise to many ingenious conjectures, including Dumas', that it referred to a caché of treasure buried at Newcastle. Five gaily-coloured figures, each over twelve feet high, representing St. John Baptist and the four Evangelists, used to decorate the east window of the chapel, but were replaced in 1890 by modern glass. It is in connection with this window that a tale is told which serves to perpetuate the ghostly traditions of the College.

The eminent artist who designed the window was sitting in the College Library studying books for the purpose of verifying certain heraldic details which he desired to introduce into his work. He happened to look up from his reading: something made him think that some one was present—yet he knew that he was alone. He saw nothing, and his eyes fell on his book once more.

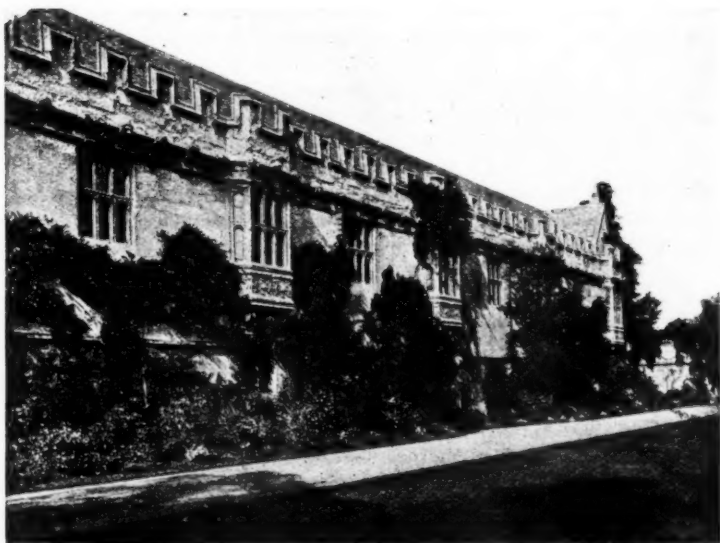
Yet again, within a few minutes, he felt constrained to look up,

and towards the farther end of the long library. This time he had no room for doubt—a figure stood there beckoning to him.

He put down his book and walked steadily towards the figure, which vanished as he reached it.

The occurrence was startling; all the more so, because he had no difficulty in recognising the form and the habiliments he had seen as those associated with the martyred Laud, whose ghost, according to a dearly-cherished legend, haunts this very gallery, and is heard almost nightly by those who occupy the rooms below.

Full of his discovery, and anxious to obtain elucidation of the story which must lie behind it, he went to one of the most learned of the



ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE: GARDEN FRONT.

College authorities. To him he imparted the facts, adding that one thing greatly puzzled him: "I could not see the figure's feet," he said.

"That is easily accounted for," said the historian. "The figure was the figure of Laud. In Laud's time the floor of the library was two inches below its present level. The ghost was the ghost of Laud, *and of course it was standing on the old floor.*"

So does this authentic and most considerate of historical ghosts receive fresh homage and ungrudging recognition.

The Library indeed, like the glorious gardens, or "groves," is a source of continual pride to members of the College. In this respect,



as in so many others, much is due to the wise liberality of the second founder, Laud, and many reminiscences of his rule are to be found in the great oak-panelled room which runs round two sides of the inner quadrangle. Its very aspect is full of allurements to the student, with its lofty shelves jutting at right angles from the wall, and forming cosy recesses where he may sit literally surrounded by books, with perhaps a glimpse of the buildings of Trinity from the window. The proximity of Trinity, however, though pleasing, is not always devoid of peril. In 1895 the rejoicings on the fifth of November in that College were the cause of a conflagration in the inner quadrangle, which might have endangered both Balliol and St. John's had it not been detected and checked by some volunteers from the latter College. On another occasion, the Library windows (many of which are of priceless value) were bombarded from Trinity for several days by a long-range catapult.

Among the belongings of Laud preserved in the Library are his pastoral staff, his ebony and ivory walking-stick, and the skull-cap which fell from his head on the scaffold. The cap, a large, red, close-fitting braided zucchetto, of which the size shows the massive proportion of his head, has been snipped here and there by irreverent hands, and for better protection is now kept under a glass shade. Besides these undoubted relics there are also seventeenth-century vestments, which a robust tradition associates with Laud, but which more probably were worn by his successors Juxon and Baylie. But the connection of Laud with the Library is by no means confined to these personal relics. Besides a number of books which he formerly owned, the College possesses, in manuscript, Laud's Diary and the history of the Archbishop's troubles and trials, written down daily in the Tower during the progress of his trial. And the Library contains many treasures fitted to gladden the heart of the bibliophile. It owns more specimens of the work of Caxton than any public library in England, except the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the Public Library at Cambridge. It is especially rich also in liturgical and medical works, and possesses a number of manuscripts presented by the founder—the spoils of the dissolved monasteries.

In the eighteenth century, and perhaps during part of the nineteenth as well, the Library was regarded rather as a valued possession than as a place of study. According to all accounts, the Fellows were not famed for literary attainments; indeed, it is related of one who died at a ripe age that he bequeathed his library to the College with much formality, but when it was examined, it was found to consist solely of an unbroken series of the *Sporting Magazine*. Under such patronage the Library was little likely either to have the works it possessed rendered accessible by means of catalogues and an orderly arrangement of books, or to add largely to its treasures from contemporary literature. When a brighter day began to dawn, a junior Fellow ventured to suggest to the Librarian that some additions should be made in certain depart-

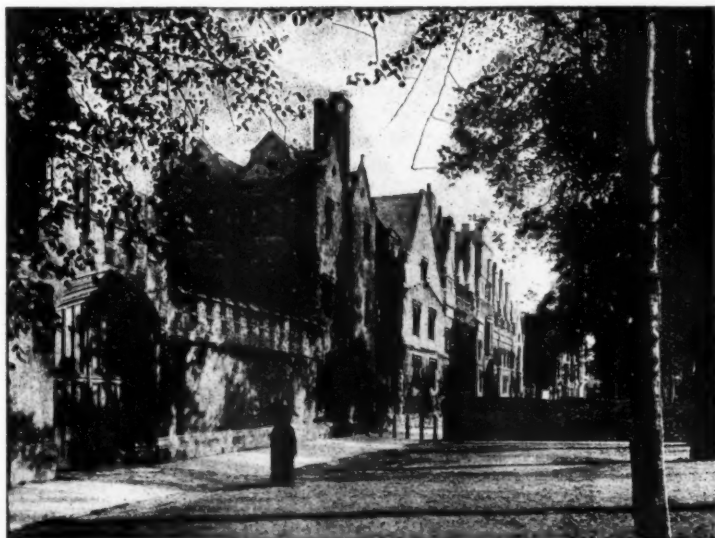
ments, but was met by the stern inquiry, "Have you read all the books, sir, that are already in the Library?" Happily this state of things has passed away, and later librarians have shown a less purely conservative spirit. Under the present Librarian, a modern historian of distinction, to whom any toil connected with the College is a labour of love, a catalogue of the whole is being prepared, and the works it contains are being systematically arranged in a manner to allow easy reference to them.

From the Library to the gardens is an easy transition. Indeed, there is no better place for viewing the gardens than from the windows of the east front of the library. They are not coeval with the College, for although always in its possession, they were farmed for some time after the foundation and were not enclosed until 1612. Since that time their aspect has undergone many notable changes as fashions in horticulture have altered. In the seventeenth century they were divided down the middle by a wall; in the early part of the eighteenth they were laid out in the formal style of the period in terraces, mounts, wildernesses, and arbours; and in 1812 the Oxford Guide inimitably describes them as forming "a scene of amenity that blends Arcadian grace with academic solitude." In 1748 they are mentioned by Salmon as the general rendezvous of gentlemen and ladies every Sunday evening in summer. They were not only frequented by the whole University, but by "the better sort of townsmen as well." University life has grown so much less rational since 1748, that it would be as vain to look for the whole University in St. John's College groves on a Sunday evening in summer as it would be to go to the Broad Walk at Christ Church to see the brilliant gathering described in "Tom Brown at Oxford."

Nowadays, debates or essays fill the evenings of the intellectual, while the less gifted fill up the time by listening to some popular preacher or devoting themselves to the study of whist. But although the contemplation of nature, except in connection with scientific research, is a thing inconceivable to the modern University, some few tranquil spirits still may be seen haunting the groves. Among older friends for many years, one of the most notable was Mr. Dodgson of Christ Church, known to the public as "Lewis Carroll," who might be easily identified by his habit, singular in Oxford, of wearing a top-hat. Mr. Ruskin has also praised the gardens in numerous passages in his works, and in one very famous one has immortalised Mr. Fidgitt, the natural and official ancestor of the present gardener. But although the "whole University" no longer resort to the gardens every Sunday evening in summer, some of "the better sort of town's folk" may still be seen in them. Certain restrictions are imposed. Perambulators and children in arms are not admitted, as they are to the Worcester gardens, and the porter may frequently be seen pursuing these forbidden guests through the quadrangles; also children below the age of twelve are not admitted unless accompanied by their parents, a regulation not

always easy to enforce. Indeed, the answers to janitorial inquiries on this subject might lead a casual observer to conclude that child marriages were far from uncommon in the city of Oxford.

During the present supremacy of the cult of sport it would be unreasonable to expect to find it banished even from a spot so redolent of a past age. It is, however, introduced in an archaic form. The Archery Club are accustomed to practise twice a week on the lawn. There is a legend of a mighty archer who shot an arrow over the trees and the road into the gate of Wadham; but the feat is probably fabulous, and certainly there is no danger of its repetition. The archer of the present day inspires no apprehension in the visitors to



ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE : FROM ST. GILES'S.

the gardens; indeed, they may frequently be seen admiring his skill from a point of view *behind* the target. The meetings of the club have been uninterrupted for many years except for a short period in Eights' Week, a few years ago, when the men of Trinity, having made a bump on the river, commemorated it by scaling the garden wall and making a bonfire of the Archery Club's targets. Lawn-tennis was also for a time permitted in the gardens, but it was never regarded with favour on account of its tendency to damage the turf, the especial pride of the keeper of the groves. Many legends are extant in regard to the terrible effect of the sight of an intruding daisy on the *custos sylvarum*. It is also related that in the mysterious month of August,

when no undergraduate is ever seen, a long line of old women, extending from one side of the lawn to the other, proceed slowly from end to end, carefully scrutinising the grass lest any seeds from the herbaceous plants cultivated in other parts of the groves should have found an improper resting-place. For this is the lawn of which a certain American asked, "How on earth do you do it?" to receive the reply, "Sir, it is quite simple. We have mowed it and rolled it, and rolled it and mowed it for three hundred years, and there you are."

Besides the gardens the College possesses a narrow strip of turf in front of the old gateway and encroaching on St. Giles's Street, which is a favourite resort of undergraduates "after Hall" in the evenings of the summer term. To this little terrace the authority of the proctors does not extend. Its belt of trees completes the circle of greenery by which the College is surrounded.

Having thus led the reader without the College gates and placed him fairly on the great northern highway, we must bid him Godspeed. The past history of St. John's College has given to it an honourable place among great educational foundations: increasing wealth is likely to extend its usefulness in the future. The present President of the College, Dr. Bellamy, is a link with men and days now remote; for he has served St. John's in various capacities for over sixty years. By such men as these are our old traditions preserved. Let the new generation appreciate them at their true value, and the ancient foundation is bound to stand fast for many days to come.

## A MADRIGAL

O N a fair Spring morning  
Love rode down the lane,  
Youth and Joy and eager Hope  
Followed in his train :  
All the primroses looked up  
Such a sight to see—  
Leaning from her lattice high  
Mockingly sang she :  
“ Love that's born at Spring-tide  
Is too lightly won,  
It will pass like silver dew  
'Neath the midday sun ! ”

All in glowing Summer  
Love went riding by,  
Not a single downy cloud  
Flecked the azure sky :  
Generous roses o'er his path  
Their sweet petals shed—  
Lingering on the terraced walk  
Wistfully she said :  
“ Love that burns so fiercely  
May have life as brief,  
It will all be dead and cold  
Ere the falling leaf ! ”

Late in golden Autumn  
Love passed up the street,  
When the reapers' sickles flash  
Through the ripened wheat :  
Russet leaves about his way  
Fluttered in a cloud—  
Half she stayed, then turned aside  
With a gesture proud :  
“ Love though late a-coming  
Might be swift to go,  
Flying as the swallows fly  
From the early snow ! ”

Through the shivering forest  
Swept the wintry blast,  
Thundering o'er the frost-bound roads  
Love came riding fast :  
Snowflakes froze upon his beard,  
Yonder lay the waste,  
As he paused before her door  
Like a man in haste :  
Swift she ran to meet him,  
“ Love, forgive, and stay,  
Never any more, Dear Heart,  
Will I say thee Nay ! ”

CHRISTIAN BURKE.

## THE ISLAND OF LOVE

MY friend Philip has long been an object of admiring wonder to me. Dame Fortune—a veritable stepdame to most of us—has showered her gifts upon him. He is young, and by inheritance possesses that sufficiency of worldly gear which assures independence, but does not tempt to sloth and wasteful selfishness. The human lot of toil has assumed for him its fairest aspect, for he is a painter. In face and figure he reminds you of the delicate and dignified aristocrats who sat to Vandyck, if you can suppose them reduced to wear the garb of present-day democracy. To know his wife is to forget the usual disparity between the ideal and the real; the rancour of the most confirmed misogynist would be melted by her presence, stately in kindness. They have one child, a pretty and happy girl, who promises to renew for them their youth when Time shall have laid his hand upon them.

Philip, again, is restful, as one might say. The fever of modern life finds no victim in him. His words are few, quiet, and well chosen; the silence of happiness has no secrets for him. He has no traffic with that world of artificiality known as "Society"; he does not seek, but is sought by his patrons, who consider it a privilege to be admitted to his studio. It is understood that the "Faerie Queen" of Spenser suggests all his subjects to him, and that his work is not destined to public exhibition. To such of his patrons as remonstrate with him against this exclusiveness, he says no more than that he has no desire to court publicity. Even to the small circle of his intimate friends, among whom I am proud to reckon myself, he refuses any explanation beyond a smiling reference to that Greek king who feared he was too happy. It is sufficiently plain, from this reference, that he shrinks from adding open fame to private happiness; and I have never rallied him upon his dread of Nemesis.

I must add that it is his pleasure to style me an Elizabethan, and invest me with the permanent post of critic and commentator. We have passed long hours together in the light of his hearth, and our conversations have preluded and accompanied the series of his canvases. Very often the quiet murmur of our words dies away into a golden silence, and the discussion of some precise expression or attitude passes into the widening and fading wreaths of blue-grey smoke of our pipes. I have never questioned him as to the course of his life before our first meeting, and it is chance that has revealed it to me. Over his mantelpiece there hangs a fine copy of Watteau's "*Embarquement pour l'Île de Cythère*," let into a sombre panel of carved oak. I knew that he had painted it during his student-days in Paris, and had



dismissed occasional wonder at the choice of a subject apparently so alien with the thought, that a young painter may find pleasure and instruction in making a brief excursion into a realm that is not his own.

You may remember that in Watteau's masterpiece, this Pilgrimage to the Island of Love, a number of lovers, wearing the costume which he has stamped for ever as his own, are grouped in various attitudes by the wooded shore of a summer sea. You have one fair lady still hesitating to join the company; but her kneeling lover whispers somewhat, and a little cupid tugs at the skirt of her robe. Another silken devotee is helping his mistress to rise from the ground. Still another has won a willing captive, and leads her onward with his arm about her waist. Behind the dip of the grassy knoll pretty lovers are making their way towards the strand, where two graceful pairs are already preparing to embark.

Well, one night I was gazing upon this apotheosis of the poetry of the opera, this pictured daydream of youth and happiness. My eyes passed gratefully from the olive-velvet sward to the shimmering wave and the pale mountain-crests beyond, and from the bust of Venus, hung about with garlands and standing out against the sappy richness of secular trees, to the carved prow of the fairy bark and its youthful semi-nude ferrymen and flitting cupids. I broke the silence by asking my friend if he had any especial reason for selecting the pretty thing for this place of honour. Well, for his part, he considered it well worthy of its position. Did I not?—was it not true that one often falls beneath a charm for which one can assign no reason, either during its persistence or after its term of power? He said no more. But presently, after rising from his seat and pacing to and fro, he set his hands upon my shoulders and looked at me with great earnestness. And at length he entered upon this confession which I here reproduce, though I doubt whether I am able to convey an impression of the rhythmical manner in which he is accustomed to speak. I take occasion, also, to state that I have used sufficient care to preserve my friend from identification. He confessed, then, much as follows:—

"I lived in happy solitude all the time of my art-student days in Paris. My one aim and endeavour was to master the technical side of my art, for I was conscious of the poet in me, and had early lamented the fortune of poet-painters, whose hands falter in realising the conceptions of their fancy. I had no relations with my fellow-students beyond the hours of silent work in the atelier. The society of men had little interest for me, and that of women I shunned with youthful haughtiness. Art was a jealous mistress, throned and scornful of all rivalry. In my long visits to the Louvre, if my eyes, accustomed to the calm of deathless women, fell upon a girl-student or a fashionable lady, an involuntary shiver passed through me, as a mystic might shiver on his return from the empyrean to the workaday world.

"How mean and graceless seemed these fragile creatures, cast in the trivial mould of careless Nature! It was mine, the rather, to live in the world of tranquil and imperishable beauty. And yet the faces of the women that other painters had portrayed and bequeathed for posterity to gaze upon did not satisfy me. I had an uneasy feeling that each of these painters had loved a daughter of Eve, whose features he had reproduced, and could not help reproducing, whenever it was his design to paint an ideal woman. Endeavour as they might to lend themselves to variety, there was one face, and one face only, for each of these painters; and I loved not with their love, I cared not to be the rival of any. I knew but too well that the one face which I must worship was still dim to me. The ideal head of my sketches and canvases lacked the stamp of life, failed in that necessary individuality, that strangeness and newness without which my pictures of the future could never be significant and unique. But time was still before me, and until that one desired face should dawn for me, I was content to pay homage to these various Muses of various painters, and visit, as it were, the realms of which these Muses were the queens. In my wanderings, a curious visitor who could not but feel that his home is elsewhere, I sojourned longer than usual in Watteau's realm. I mingled with his shepherd-pilgrims, his pastoral comedians that haunt the *Tempé*-like valley over against the island of Venus. I surrendered myself to the charm, and would fain have made my pilgrimage along with these graceful Leanders and Sylvios. . . ."

With this he rose and pointed to the left of the picture. "Nay, at that time I could almost have persuaded myself that I was one of these pilgrims who are about to enter the fairy bark bound for Cythera, and that my Colombine or my Isabelle—for such, by right of tradition, must be her name—was this lovable maid who lightly raises her skirt that she may board the golden *Argosy*. She was my chosen love because her face was hidden from sight. Doubtless her face was the face that I desired to behold. Mark how happily I lend her aid! For am I not looking into her wondrous eyes?"

I was smiling at his ardour, and half wondering that he had forgotten for the moment his serious dignity, and lent himself, against his wont, to that vivacity of representation which I have found in most artists when they describe to you past events or emotions. He caught my smile, and lightly laughed in comprehension. "Yes, in other words, I took pleasure in making this copy which you are looking at." He sat down again, and presently continued:—

"I did not wish to linger too long in the company of Watteau, and knew no better way to escape from the spell he had cast on me than to copy his masterpiece. Possession, they tell us, is the surest way to achieve satiety. I do not believe it, for I find that one never wearies of that which is lovely. Be that as it may, the loveliness of Watteau was not my chosen loveliness. I must take still other measures to recover mastery of myself. And as I was able to amuse my whims

and fancies, I procured two Watteau costumes, made after my preliminary drawing of this group, one for myself, and the other—— What was I to do with the other? Do not laugh too much! I tricked out my lay-figure with it; but she—or it—looked almost as stupid as a real woman, and I am afraid I flung a volume of Schopenhauer—with the *Essay on Women* in it—at her head. I confess that I felt quite repentant when I saw the piteous—or was it resentful?—attitude she took after my ungallant assault upon her. Laughing to myself, I donned my own costume, and, by way of apology, I picked up my guitar and sang a serenade of prostrate adoration. I had come across an old Lulli-Quinault opera in my hunts among the bookstalls that line the Quays, and could preserve the ‘local colour’ with all possible completeness.

“Well, time went on, and I returned to London. I was working at the first of my ‘*Faerie Queen*’ pictures, but my ideal face was still very dim to me. One day it happened that I had been studying prints of Renaissance costume at the Museum, and was beguiling my way homeward with the musical remembrance of some of the sweet-flowing stanzas of my chosen poet. Little heed was I paying to the things and beings about my path, till my eyes chanced to fall and stay upon a slender figure in front of me. It seemed strangely familiar. In a moment I recognised her. It was my Colombine. The morning rain had left the pavement muddy. Colombine had gathered up her skirt with a shapely hand, just as in the picture. The belt that clasped the short separate bodice, the cape, the updrawn hair—all was there! And indeed it is surprising, till you think of it, how modern is the costume that Colombine wears in the picture. It was true that the dress was now darker in hue and of simpler stuff, but the day and the scene required the change. Well, I was too wise, or considered myself too wise, to overtake her and risk disenchantment by the sight of her face. I followed leisurely, amused by the discovery of Colombine in present-day London. Presently she turned up a side street, and the charm was gone.

“Next day, I was returning from the same business at the same hour, wondering idly if I should see her again. I loitered, gazing somewhat vacantly into the shop-windows, much as if to find an excuse for myself. A bookstall occupied me better for a little while, and, on turning away, I discovered my unknown acquaintance a little in front. Evidently she was no Marquise in disguise, and her simplicity and unconscious grace told of no actress of the stage or of society. The regular hour pointed, no doubt, to some regular employment. This time I hastened my step, and, passing her, caught a glimpse of a pure, pale profile. My dignity forbade me to turn again and look, but it was not long before I regretted my obedience to dignity.

“Well, life is composed of beginnings that have no sequels, I assured myself, and gradually other thoughts led to forgetfulness. Yet the next day found me at the same hour in the same neighbourhood.

This time, however, I was walking in the opposite direction. It appeared to me that I was but gratifying a whim, and I was ready to smile with more or less bitterness at the trivial shock of disappointment I was preparing for myself. And probably Colombine would not come to-day. . . . Stay, here she comes, still in the same dress . . . nearer, nearer . . . she is past! . . . Was I crestfallen, enchanted? I hardly knew. Yet gradually it came over me that here was the suggestion of the face I wanted. Somewhat pale and worn it was, as if it knew monotonous and joyless days. But with a little happiness, a little sunshine, the flower of her beauty would expand. A harmony of well-balanced features; eyes with depths to them; a well-curved mouth. Yes, I convinced myself more and more that here was the face which should be the theme for my happy variations. Not a face, perhaps, in its original to compel instant attention, but one that gained by recollection. A face whose charm would be like that of certain books we love, which have little or no attraction for the many, and yet are assured of a noiseless and permanent success among the delicate. I smiled at the development of my fancy, and smiled still more at the excuses I gave myself for allowing my fancy to develop. But was the matter to end here? And if not, how was I to bring myself to effect the passage from fancy to the world of fact. Her business, if nothing else, precluded the idea of asking her to pose for a few studies. And was it not enough to brood in absence over the charm of her face? Would it not be more to my purpose not to copy her features directly, but to trust them to the enhancement of recollection? Consulting memory with pencil in hand, it was possible that, when time should be ripe, I might find on a sudden beneath my hand that very face which should be the sign and seal of my art.

"At last I determined that I must make opportunity to study her face at my leisure. An early day found me waiting for her passage along the wonted street. In my hand was a brief note. I had expressed in courteous terms the service she could render me in the composition of certain pictures. I offered a suitable recompense. I requested that she should call upon me some evening with a friend, and ended with renewed respect. This time I stepped before her, raised my hat, begged her to read the note I gave her, desired pardon, and withdrew that she might pass. I saw a slight flush upon her cheeks and caught the mute wonder of her eyes. But I hurried on without looking backward, avoiding all offence. Decidedly it was the face I wanted. I could not let myself doubt for an instant. Then I found myself wondering what might be the sound of her voice. Would it be harsh and unrefined? If she came, should I prevent her speech by a request for unbroken silence? But was that a thing to ask from a daughter of Eve? And in what did her manner of speech concern me? There was one thing I congratulated myself upon: the hour of her coming would be that of the lamplight and fireglow I love.

"You know my agreement with Martial's desire for the *focus perennis*," he added in another tone of voice, abruptly addressing me. I nodded, not wishing to interrupt the quiet course of his dreamy phrases.

"At the hour appointed," he went on, "a young lady and a little girl were shown into my studio. Colombine was dressed plainly in black, and the child seemed to be her sister. Were they orphans, or was the sombre dress an appeal to respect? I bade her be seated, and busied myself with tea-making. Still her attitude was one of attention, not mistrustful, but guarded. By way of diversion I talked to the child, who was all eyes and curiosity, and won her heart by the display of some picture-books. Finally, I turned to the silent elder sister, and found tears in her eyes. Was it the change from some narrow home and daily privation to the roominess of a studio with its artful disorder, its symbols of other climes and past epochs, its many appeals to the senses of colour and form? The hearth glowed bravely, and the silence was only broken by the rustling of the pages on which the child was intent. Ah! there was the resource of my sketches and studies! In a moment the tears were gone, and smiles and glances of interest and swift comprehension greeted my exposition of their subject and their place in my projects. The lamplight fell on her cheeks and lighted up the pretty rebellious waves of her hair. I was standing, and could quietly observe the sweep of the neck and shoulders, not wholly disguised by the plainness of her dress. I could admire the parting of her lips when my reply to some eager question was awaited, the noble setting of her eyes, and the plane of her shadowed forehead. But at last, as if prompted by fear that the charm would cease if prolonged, I glanced at my watch, and Colombine—the name was quite unsuited to her dignity—rose from her seat in quick interpretation of my action. Her face was once more grave, and a slight contraction of her eyebrows seemed to ask the purpose of her coming. The child was disconsolate at the interruption, and could only be consoled by the loan of the book in which she was absorbed, and the promise of a speedy return to this manifest Paradise. But of what service could she be to me? her sister found courage to inquire. I told her that she had been of great service already, and that I should be greatly obliged if she could spare me another hour in a week's time. Not a word was said in reply, but a shy, wondering smile of eyes and mouth greeted my polite farewell. A light touch of hands followed. The door closed upon her, and I was left to my thoughts.

"During her next visit I found no disenchantment of repetition, and I was delighted by a new discovery. Colombine, still occupied, as it seemed, in trying to learn my surroundings by heart, timidly drew a finger across the strings of my guitar. At that time, I had a habit of picking chords while I was thinking out my pictures, stretched nonchalant on my cushions. By way of reply to her questioning eyes, I told her of this with a laugh. And presently, taking the instrument, I

fell to singing my Lulli pastoral. Not long after the old-time strain had come to its end, I was seated at the piano, trying her voice, which I found to be a sweet contralto of a quality which my old French acquaintances would call *intime*. In subsequent visits she would read, at my request, in a low singing rhythm that was peculiarly her own, long stanzas of my Spenser while I made studies of her face. But how am I able to describe the charm of visits that were oases even in my days of youthful devotion to my art? It were as easy to analyse the flow of Spenser's stanzas which glide on like a calm summer-stream deep hidden beneath arching trees. Besides, we moderns, with our turn for melancholy, shrink, it would seem, from dwelling on whatsoever is peacefully happy, and can only describe with fulness that which is sad and bitter. The gaiety of elder times we find coarse and superficial, and brand quiet joy with the stigma of 'sentimentality.'

"But how was all this to end? I was now sufficiently master of my ideal face, and, without any promptings of vanity, I was beginning to be afraid for the heart of my unprofessed model. I had seen her mother, and found in her neither a Mrs. Nickleby, lacrymose and mournful over fallen gentility, nor yet a Madame Cardinal, with an eager eye for the main chance. I told her of my friendly interest in her daughter. Some of us are never young, in the sense of being selfishly thoughtless, and she forgave my lack of years in favour of my gravity. Gradually their tiny home took a brighter aspect, and my trivial benefactions were accepted in the spirit in which they were offered. I believed that Colombine did not neglect her daily calling, and probably her new education was the more cherished for its contrast with the dullness of her working hours. Her bright intelligence quickly grasped the books I lent her. The world of ideas widened out before her; and the reflections I saw in the pure mirror of my heart would have charmed a sage to forget his distrust of illusion.

"How was it all to end? I could not dismiss her as a mere model. With each new friendship comes an additional duty, a possibility of future sorrows to be shared beyond the halcyon days of the present. Had I not voluntarily assumed the position of a brother towards her, if of nothing more? Could I satisfy honour by giving her the opportunity of what is called 'education'—the sterile education that would fit her to gain perhaps less than she now earned? And then, such regular and colourless education would ill replace that which she was acquiring in my studio from my books, from my words, that she so wistfully treasured and returned to me veritably in gold for brass.

"The winter came to an end, and in the spring I had determined to go to Italy to make some landscape studies for my picture of 'The Bower of Bliss.' I found myself unable not to reflect how much greater would be my happiness if I saw Italy through her eyes. To give happiness, to hear and see this given happiness expressed, is the only true happiness. And on such thoughts followed imagined scenes,



ever with a foreground of a man and a maid in idyllic fashion. What could life offer more sweet than this: the whole devotion of the beggar-maid to her King Cophetua? Where in the world of society was I to find one whom I could so truly re-create? For it was as if I had re-created this sweet woman-soul by calling her forth from darkness to the full light of joyful day. But at other times I shivered before the cold breath of worldly wisdom. What if I grew weary; if on possession followed satiety; if I were not sufficiently noble to inspire a permanent homage or return it? And yet I felt in me the stuff of a lover for whom love is single and never-ending. Her face in absence was continually before me, and there was no charm wherewith I had dowered the loved one of my imagination which I could not find in her heart. Her low voice was restful, and her intonation of the stanzas of Spenser that she so often read out to me as I sat painting promised the ineffable charm of the words in which she would tell her love, should love be allowed. I called to mind half ironically the various tests and trials of devotion which you may find recorded by dramatists and novelists. One after another I laughed them away. To inform her suddenly that I was become penniless was but to elicit speedy sympathy and tenderness. I must not lightly tamper with her dignity or my own. I could think of nothing better than to paint her in Watteau-fashion, and, when the picture was finished, to offer it to her as a parting gift, telling her that it was my intention to go abroad and remain there for an indefinite period. . . ."

He paused, and my eyes followed his to a portrait that hung upon the wall. I had often admired this Watteau-portrait of his wife. What of his secret remained? He paused, I say, and I asked no more. They that are happy speak not of their happiness to others. We smoked on in silence, till by-and-by a gentle tap at the door heralded the entrance of a charming woman-soul, as Philip had called her, to tell us in her deep musical voice that she was sure we had talked enough. And, far too soon, I was on my way through the chill streets to my lonely home, glad that I knew at least one perfect pair in this world of prose.

GARNET SMITH.

## ST. GEORGE

ST. GEORGE, as many a less distinguished personage, has good reason to complain of the indiscreet zeal of his admirers. There is neither bound nor limit to the humiliation he has had to endure owing to the fact that, whenever he was in question, they have allowed their enthusiasm to get the better of their common-sense. They have insisted on singing his praise on all occasions, on ascribing to him the most diverse virtues, and on making him the hero of the very wildest legends they could conceive. In their eagerness to exalt him above all other saints, they have rendered him an object of suspicion ; they have, in fact, made the world look on him as one whose character, nay, whose very existence, is open to question.

These misguided persons began their inventions in very early days. Already in the fifth century, within 200 years of the Saint's death, they had woven such marvellous romances about him and his doings, that Pope Gelasius was forced to interfere and prohibit the faithful from reading them. The Life of St. George was probably the very first book ever placed on the Index. After the papal decree, the Saint's indiscreet friends seem to have left him in peace for a time ; but they were again to the fore, more noisily demonstrative than ever, as soon as the Crusades began. They swore that they saw him fighting at Ascalon, side by side with our King Richard, and that it was he who turned the battle in our favour. They saw him quite plainly, they said, on a magnificent white charger, dashing about from place to place, always just where the struggle was fiercest. He was a marvel of beauty, of course—Apollo and St. Stephen combined—and the armour he wore was of gold, all glittering with precious stones. He carried in his hand—on this point they were very emphatic—not a sword, but a white flag with a great red cross marked on it. They stood their ground so stoutly, were so sure of their facts, that King Richard himself was convinced that, for once, they spoke the truth. He therefore promptly placed himself and his whole army under the protection of the Saint, rendering him solemn thanks the while for his timely aid.

From that time forth St. George's fame waxed apace ; and no sooner were the Crusaders in England again, than the most wonderful stories were spread abroad of what he had done for them while they were in the Holy Land—how he had fought for them, planned for them, and helped them to outwit their enemies. There was not one among them, they all declared, who would ever have seen his home again had it not been for St. George. Then hymns of praise and thanksgiving rang through the land ; and wherever men met, in castle, monastery, or homestead, the prowess of the Cavalier-Saint was extolled. Nor

did the English folk rest content with merely talking; they straightway took to building churches and arranging pageants in his honour. At length, bethinking themselves that whereas Ireland had its Patrick and France its Denis, they were without a patron saint, they promptly proclaimed St. George. And this, too, without saying a word either to the Pope or the King. They put themselves and their country under his protection, and gave him clearly to understand that, foreigner though he might be, he must thenceforth have no thought but for England. Yet at that very time, had they but known it, he was already the patron saint of Valencia, Aragon, Genoa, Malta, and Barcelona.

Although St. George was hailed as patron by the people of England in the twelfth century, he does not seem to have been officially recognised as such until two centuries later. It was not until 1349, when King Edward III. instituted the Order of the Garter, that he was formally acknowledged by royal decree as national saint. Meanwhile his popularity had increased by leaps and bounds, and there was no other saint in the whole land so much thought of. Whenever knights or squires crossed swords, "St. George and Merrie England" was their cry; traders and craftsmen, too, when making their bargains, swore by him lustily, and so did lovers. He figured in every pageant that was held, he and his dragon; for before long a dragon was invented for him. The Saxon Beowulf had slain the monster Grendel, it seems; St. George must therefore slay a dragon. He was the hero, too, of half the songs that were sung, whether on battlefields or in ladies' bowers, in churches or in wayside inns; and it was the custom among carousers to drink toasts in his honour. It was, perhaps, on this account that Puritans and such folk entertained for him a quite special animosity, and snapped and snarled whenever his name was mentioned. "Saint, forsooth!" they would say; "a pretty sort of Saint to be hail-fellow-well-met with all the rogues in the country-side."

In post-Reformation days these same Puritans started a regular crusade against St. George, and insisted on the issuing of a decree forbidding the Guilds to carry his statue in their processions. They might carry his dragon if they chose, the Guilds were told, a permission of which many of them availed themselves. In Norwich, up to the year 1835, a prominent feature of the civic procession on St. John's Eve was St. George's great green and gold dragon. Within comparatively recent times it was the custom for all who wished to be in the fashion to wear blue on April 23, in honour of the Saint.

"On St. George's Day, when blue is worn,  
The blue harebells the fields adorn."

Only two or three years ago an attempt was made—the blame of it rests on those indiscreet friends of his—to depose St. George from his rank as our patron, and install St. Peter in his place. Needless to say it proved a failure.

Thanks, perhaps, to the action of Pope Gelasius, very little is known of the real life of St. George beyond the barest details. A record of his adventures was kept, it is true, by one of his servants, a certain Pasicrates, and extracts from this document were published in the sixteenth century by a Bishop of Verona. But this Pasicrates, as the rest of the Saint's friends, seems to have let his imagination run riot. He paints his master in such glowing colours that one stands before the picture in amazement. Never was there such a doer of doughty deeds, such a worker of miracles. The whole record is beyond the belief of even the most credulous. There is, however, fairly well attested evidence that St. George was born in Cappadocia, in the latter part of the third century; that he was a soldier by profession, and that he gained great reputation for himself fighting in the Roman army. So gallantly did he bear himself in one battle that he attracted the attention of the Emperor Diocletian, who, as a reward for his bravery, ennobled him, and made him a tribune. The Saint was little more than a boy at the time, and, according to tradition, he was one with whom theretofore all things had gone well. He was the idol of his soldiers, rich both in friends and in gold, and the statues of the gods were not more beautiful than he. The ball of fortune was at his feet, and there was hardly an office in the whole Roman world to which he might not have attained. But, as many another whom the Fates love, he threw away his chances, and all for the sake of a scruple of conscience.

He was a Christian, it seems, the son of Christian parents, and although he never paraded the fact in the days when men were free to worship as they chose, he proclaimed it from the very house-top as soon as persecution began, and to be a member of the hated sect was counted high treason. When an imperial edict against the Christians was posted up on the walls of Nicomedia, he tore it down with his own hand and trampled it under foot in the sight of all the people. He then betook himself straight to Rome, knowing full well that he was carrying his life in his hand as he went. He made his way to the Senate, where the Emperor was sitting in state, surrounded by the highest in the land, and there he unfolded his grievances, told how the Christians were being harried and tormented, although they had done no wrong. Standing there in the midst of all that was most powerful in Imperial Rome, he confessed that he himself was a Christian, and in his own name, and the name of those who shared his faith, he appealed to Diocletian for justice; he demanded that those persecutions should cease.

The result was a foregone conclusion: St. George was seized, he was tortured again and again. Such terrible suffering indeed did he undergo before he died—it was on the 23rd of April—that his contemporaries bestowed on him the name of the Great Martyr.

EDITH SELLERS.

## LAO REN

## A CHINESE STORY

LAO REN was a fisherman who lived in a mud hut on the desolate shore of the Gulf of Pechili.

He had dwelt alone for many years. His two sons had been lost in the waters of the Gulf by the capsizing of their junk, and Kin-tsi his wife had taken opium to drown her grief.

In those days Lao Ren had lived with his family in a well-built cottage half-way between the seashore and Ninghai, the market town, where he found a ready sale for his fish.

But after the death of his sons, and with advancing years, poverty crept upon him. He became rheumatic, and could no longer manage his junk in any but the calmest weather. His supply of fish became irregular, with the loss of customers, and he was turned out of his cottage by a landlord who collected his own rents.

It was then that Lao Ren built his mud hut upon the shore, near to the creek where his junk lay moored, a last memento of better days; the junk that had borne his sons away on a brilliant morning long ago, to come ashore, battered and beaten by the waves, bereft of its living freight.

The hut was built of mud bricks, roughly shaped, from the ooze at the creek's mouth, baked in the summer sun.

Sometimes the fierce north wind, which sweeps over the Gulf and its sandy shore with Siberian force, tore down Lao Ren's work and left his dwelling in ruins; but from bricks, stored in the summer, he would patiently rebuild his humble shelter from the elements.

In North China, where winter is very severe, the rivers and creeks are frozen for months at a time, and then Lao Ren kept snug in his hut, while his junk was fast in the ice outside. Many days passed by with the monotony of content possible to a Chinaman. He had his pipe, and his other wants were few. When he had no fish he contented himself with the coarse and scanty fare he was able to obtain, subsisting for weeks upon "siao-mi," an inferior rice, which he cooked over an open fire laid upon stones. The only outlet for the smoke was through the doorway, and the dense clouds filling the hut were the cause of much suffering to the old man, whose eyes were weak and dim. But it did not occur to his conservative mind to alter the construction of the hut, which had served him so long without a chimney.

The ruling passion of Lao Ren's heart was hatred of the foreigner; his only sorrow, that he had no son to worship at his Ancestral Tablet; his one anxiety, that he had not yet procured a decent coffin for his burial.

The memory of his dead sons was a desolation too absolute for expression, but he still hoped, by a lucky summer sale of fish, to obtain the coffin, and his hatred of the foreigner found vent in any means of insult or annoyance which offered, as they passed along the track by the sea between the nearest Treaty Port and Ninghai City, where there was a little band of foreigners who taught a new religion.

Lao Ren hated them, and experienced a deep satisfaction at each well-aimed volley of saliva with which he greeted the foreign chairs, mingled with curses and foul language.

In years gone by he had been ferryman, and with a punt had carried travellers across the creek, which after heavy rain was swollen and dangerous. This gave him many opportunities of insult to the hated race.

When the weather was most inclement, and travelling by laborious Chinese method, a source of suffering to the hardest, Lao Ren would be cut to the bone by the piercing wind, in order to keep the frozen, impatient foreigner signalling on the bank, in doubt whether his meaning could be plain to the ferryman who so long delayed.

But that was in former years. Lao Ren had no longer strength to ferry.

There had once been a foreigner, towards whom the fisherman relaxed his bitter hostility. This was Ayres Sien-seng, who by patient faithful friendship towards the old Chinaman had attained a silent toleration; and in truth Lao Ren was secretly attracted by the Faith of which he preached.

Once, when a longer period than usual elapsed between Ayres Sien-seng's visits, Lao Ren had taken some pains on market-day, as he sold his fish, to inquire indirectly of the foreigner, and heard that he had died of a fever, contracted from a dying Chinaman whom he had visited in a common lodging-house. Lao Ren's imperturbable visage remained expressionless as he heard of his friend's fate, but nevertheless he was not unmoved.

That was in summer, when the land was filled with waving plains of richly-coloured corn, the heat excessive, and millions of flies and other pests daily more intolerable for want of heavy rain.

Now it was autumn: wild, windy autumn. On an October night, when great gales were sweeping over the land from the north, and the sand upon the seashore was whirling in blinding storms, Lao Ren smoked snugly within his hut.

He had caught no fish that day, and knew that there was little chance of catching any for many days, but it did not trouble him. Inside the hut it was wonderfully warm, with its thick mud walls and confined space. Besides, his long goatskin garment protected him from the cold, though it had served for many winters and was ragged in places. Also he had a store of tobacco, procured on last market-day, when his fish had sold well, and he had even disposed of the stale



ones, with flabby skin and sunken eyes, to Pi-sa-fu, the foreigner's cook, who was good-natured but weak.

Truly it was tempestuous weather! How the wind howled over the sandy waste! Lao Ren wondered indifferently if his hut would stand till daylight. It was a night of Egyptian blackness: the ferry deserted, and the ferryman gone home to shelter and comfort. No travellers would be out on such a night.

The wind whistled and tore at the plastered cracks of the hut, and Lao Ren dozed in the warmest corner. The heavy boom of the breaking waves increased with the rising tide and mingled with his dreams. Suddenly he was roused by urgent knocking and calling at the door, roughly nailed together from old pieces of wreckage. He listened. It was a foreign tone and the words spoken in dialect, sounding strangely to a native ear. Lao Ren gathered that a ferryman was wanted. He replied with an oath that he was no longer ferryman, and refused to open. The demand was made again more urgently, and Lao Ren, infuriated, cast the door open, and yelling against the violence of the wind, bade the traveller depart, accompanying his words with a true Chinese curse. He recognised the foreign Sien-seng gentleman from Ninghai City, whom he hated with an added bitterness for his two sons, who passed along the shore on their way to school in the Treaty Port.

The younger of them, with dark eyes and hair, not uncongenial to Chinese eyes, had tried to be friends with the surly fisherman who cast such scowling glances at the lads, but he met with stolid repulse, and never knew that his advances had stirred old memories in Lao Ren's mind.

The foreigner entreated Lao Ren to listen to his words, and forced a foot across the threshold of the door, offering a string of cash. "Ferry me over the creek," he cried. "My son is dying, and I go for medical help. For the sake of your own sons, ferry me over the creek, and you shall be rewarded."

But Lao Ren, with bitter hate, turned a deaf ear and spurned the foreigner from his door, knowing that in the darkness of such a night to attempt the creek without a knowledge of its depths and current would be hopeless.

"Cross the creek as you may," he howled; "and may you sink to the bottom, and may your soul be eaten by dogs." With the words he jammed the door into its socket, and spitting violently to cleanse himself from the contamination of the stinking foreigner, returned to sleep. Why should the spawn of the foreigner live while he was childless, his sons drowned in the waters of Pechili?

Morning dawned, and Lao Ren wakened to find the storm abated, and to hear from an early traveller at the ferry, from Ninghai City, that the child of the foreigner had sickened, and died before medical aid could be brought, owing to a delay at the ferry.

Lao Ren's expressionless eyes did not blink at the words he heard,

but he was conscious of strange symptoms at his heart as he thought upon the boy who had offered him kindly words, with friendly glances from black eyes, eyes with a gleam in them, eyes which recalled his dead Shing-tu to the desolate father.

Autumn drifted into winter. The flat fields were stripped by a poor population of every tuft of grass and stubble. The plains of deeply-tinted grain had vanished with the summer, and the world around Ninghai was clothed in glittering white.

The Chinese hate the cold, and during the frozen months Lao Ren huddled within his hut. He aged rapidly, and this year the cold got into his joints, stiffening the bones and knotting his fingers.

He was seized with excruciating pains, and then he fared badly in his solitude.

He felt that he must soon die, and accepted the fact with indifference; but the absence of cash wherewith to provide himself a coffin pressed heavily upon him.

The last time he had been into the city to sell fish he had lingered outside Wang the carpenter's, where three large pink coffins were exposed in the street for sale, and he had inquired of Wang, in an indifferent tone, as to the number of cash he asked for a plain coffin; but he knew, before his tongue framed the question, that the sum named would be far beyond what he could hope to save, now that he was old and disabled. Otherwise he might have taken a hand at a barrow or other coolie labour, but the time was past for that.

The price of his junk would relieve him of any anxiety respecting his coffin, but that would mean the loss of his livelihood.

There were some brilliant days about the time of the Chinese New Year, which is early in February, and then there is universal holiday and rejoicing; but Lao Ren had no means wherewith to rejoice and no friends with whom to feast.

Tempted by the warmth, he crept forth from his hut down to the creek to sit basking in the prow of his junk, but his temerity was followed by an acute and agonising attack of rheumatism, which laid him low for more days than he could count, suffering much for the need of some one to attend his simple wants.

In the early year Pi-sa-fu, the foreigner's cook from Ninghai City, going in to Chifu to buy mien-hua (wadding), passed along the seashore, and seeing no smoke nor sign of life from the fisher's hut, went in to see how his old acquaintance fared. His stolid heart was moved when he found Lao Ren in such a forlorn and miserable condition. He lay on sacking upon the mud floor, too weak to kindle the pipe which had been his solace for many years. Pi-sa-fu sat down beside him, and, though not a man of many words, drew forth from the old man the burden that pressed most heavily upon him.

"I shall die before the thawing of the creek," he feebly said, "but I have no coffin. The price of my junk is sufficient, but she is frozen fast in the ice, and I shall find no one to pay me the cash."

Pi-sa-fu tended him with rough kindness, but he had no consolation to offer, and at twilight continued his journey. When he reached home with his bundle of mien-hua he told the foreigner of Lao Ren's condition, and said "Ta iao si" (He is dying).

The next day a group of coolies laboured heavily along the shifting sands of the Gulf of Pechili, towards Lao Ren's hut. Their burden was a massive pink wood coffin, sent by the foreigner in Ninghai City to the old fisher for his burial. Pi-sa-fu escorted the gift, and as he stood again by the side of the dying man, he delivered the message from the foreigner whose son had died, and whom Lao Ren had refused to pilot across the ferry on the wild October night of the preceding autumn.

"The Sien-seng entreats you to accept the coffin which you have so earnestly desired, in the Name of the God of whom you heard from Ayres Sien-seng, who died in Ninghai City."

Lao Ren's eyes were already glazed by death, but he heard the message, and a flood of recollection swept over him, with a sense of sorrow for his cruel conduct to the foreigner.

The coolies edged the huge coffin into the hut with difficulty, its bulk leaving but little space. Lovingly Lao Ren tapped and fingered its pink side. He would have liked to sniff the aromatic wood, but had not strength to lift his head.

His anxiety was at an end, and he would rest in decent burial as his forefathers had rested. He owed this great boon to the foreigner whom he had injured, and this was the fruit of the doctrine of which Ayres Sien-seng had spoken. Certainly there must be truth in his words.

"Mien liao O-men-tih tsai" (Forgive us our trespasses), whispered Lao Ren, and a deep peace filled his soul.

At twilight Pi-sa-fu retraced his steps to Ninghai, knowing, with the unerring instinct of his race, that life in the old fisherman was practically extinct. A strong north wind was rising steadily, and the loose sand blew in blinding gusts. As the hours of the night passed, the storm increased into the memorable gale which caused great loss of life and shipping in the Gulf of Pechili and the uncertain Yellow Sea. For two days no travelling was possible, and the seashore was deserted.

When the first caravan of pack-mules and drivers passed along the sandy track, they found the fisherman's mud hut crumbled into ruins, and partially buried in a deep drift of sand.

Lao Ren sleeps quietly beneath.

V. D.

## IN THE WIND

BY THE EDITOR

AN Editor's post-box at this time of the year is full of refreshing things. Solid masses of manuscript are lightened by airy lyrics redolent of the spring and summer which will soon be here again. Meanwhile, the tone of conversation that prevails around us is distinctly doleful; we hear a great deal of the bitterness of March winds and the rigours of a British winter. It would not, in fact, be surprising to learn that those very people who are thus blithe and frolicsome on paper, chanting gaily the joys of life and love in meadows sprinkled with the humble daisy, have a word or two to say distinctly uncomplimentary to the season in the privacy of their own homes. However that may be, it is a puzzle to me how the poetic mind sets its machinery in order, and manages to get far enough ahead with its work to suit the topical exigencies of mere editors. The force of imagination, I suppose; and yet one would expect the poet to be intensely susceptible to the actual facts surrounding him. We all know, on the other hand, that frightful tragedies are written with common steel pens on cheap lined paper bought at the nearest shop, tragedies imagined by quiet people, in apparently dreary and unprofitable suburban walks, people who are personally seldom heard to indulge in anything more terrifying than a mild expletive. Doubtless the poet who used to drag his unoffending wife by the hair of her head to the top of a lofty staircase and thence to hurl her downwards, that he might truly give the effect of a physical thud in a drama which he was concocting, is something more than an historical myth, though for my part I could never quite believe in his existence—or his wife's. It is easier by far to credit the average breadwinner with the powers that can be trusted to rise to any occasion at the shortest notice.

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We are now in the midst of what is called by courtesy the Spring publishing season. But the publishers are lying low. Long lists of new books are being published, but the war is responsible for the fact that these announcements are thoroughly misleading. The present Spring publishing season is a hollow and a sham. Though this is the case, the question, "What is the book of the hour?" need not be asked in vain. There is always a book of the hour. A few weeks ago it was "The Transvaal from Within," and even now that book

holds the field to a great extent, whilst we have only just passed from the charming society of Miss Mary Cholmondeley, whose spell is still upon us. Once again, give place to a lady! This time it is Miss Mary Johnstone, the author of "The Old Dominion," whose new book, "By Order of the Company," has crossed the Atlantic to take us by storm, as it has done those who have made its acquaintance in America. "By Order of the Company" is, like several of the novels which have attained a huge circulation in America in recent days, a romance with a historical background. The setting of the story is Virginian; the time, that of James the First. The story is one which depends on plot and passion for its effect. People like to be stirred in a novel, and there is no lack of emotion, called forth by the play of character upon character, in the various strongly-written scenes of which this book is composed. We have here, indeed, a vivid, picturesque piece of work, one which is not marred by the somewhat conventional conclusion of the story. After all, there is something to be said for the old plan which gives us, when "the fight is over, the battle done," that repose and peace which belong to "a happy ending."

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Mr. Andrew Lang has lately declared that most poets and literary men hate music. Is not this statement an exaggeration? Literary men in regard to music are like other men; that is to say, some like it, and some are quite indifferent to it. I do not believe that any literary man ever hated music *as* music. You might as well speak of a man hating woman (I have never met a misogynist) or the sunshine. I can understand a poet getting into a passion when the piano through the wall prevents him working off his fine frenzy; but that a man should absolutely hate music, music in the abstract, if you will allow the term, is to me quite inconceivable. Even Johnson, who is generally quoted as among the music-haters, and who, as we all know, called music "the least disagreeable of noises," even he was at the worst only insensible to the charms of the art. He once bought a flageolet—that he never made out a tune is no matter—and Burney, the musical historian, says that six months before his death he asked to be taught "at least the alphabet of your language." Scott, too, though the incurable defects of his voice and ear drove his music-teacher to despair, was passionately fond of the national music of his country, and, like Congreve's Jeremy, had a "reasonable ear for a jig." Nay, Lamb himself, whose lack of musical ear has been boldly proclaimed in one of the best of the Elia essays, used to go to Vincent Novello's house for no other purpose than to hear Novello play the organ and listen to his daughter's singing. These, you may say, are types of the indifferent men. But look how many authors have explicitly declared their fondness for music. De Quincey was one, Browning was another. Did not Goldsmith play the flute and

Stevenson talk eternally about the penny whistle? Rogers loved a barrel-organ to distraction, and Ruskin went into wild raptures over Hallé's playing of Thalberg's "Home, Sweet Home." Burns scraped on the fiddle, and Shelley made music on a mandoline. Moore sang Irish songs, and Goethe had advanced music lessons from Mendelssohn. Literary men hate music indeed! Dear Andrew must be dreaming.

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A Countess who writes "comments" in a literary weekly deplores the fact that, in spite of the enormous popularity which our Royal family enjoys, it can never set a fashion. And what is the fashion the Countess would have us adopt from the royalties? The fashion of wearing beards! All because the Prince and the Duke of York wear beards! Has the Countess never considered how absurdly some faces would look in a beard? Supposing every woman were to wear her hair in the same way, what frights some women would look! So with men and beards. I read about Brahms, the German composer, the other day, that he wore a beard because he did not want to be taken for an actor or an acrobat. Men are not so particular, as a rule. I quite admit the "grand difficulty" about shaving, especially on winter mornings, when the thermometer is at zero; but I would rather get into a "scrape" every day all the year round than face the world with the stubbly abomination which makes the half-way between shaving and the growing of a beard. I believe the theory is held by some that the constant eradication of the beard is one of the punishments entailed on man by the curse of Eden. It would certainly not be pleasant to think that Eve was at the bottom, so to speak, of that twenty-seven feet of hirsute growth which the scientist calculates that a man has mown down by the time he is eighty. For my own part, I prefer the Darwinian theory, which regards the beard as merely the survival of a primitive decoration. Man, according to this theory, was originally as hairy as Barnum's baboon. As he rolled down the ages he began to sleep on his side and to sit with his back against a tree, and so the hair wore off in patches. You will remark, of course, that the hair of the dog is not worn off in that way, but a great theory is not to be set aside by an objection so trifling. By-and-by—so the explanation proceeds—our ancestors "awoke to the consciousness that they were patchy and spotty," and they resolved to "live down" all hair that was not ornamental. The Darwinian history does not tell whether they held a general consultation on the matter; but, at any rate, with remarkable unanimity, they seem to have fixed on the eyebrows, the moustache, and the beard as being all that was worth preserving of the primitive covering. They would have saved us some trouble if they had gone further, and had "worn off" a great deal more.

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Speaking of fights that are over, I am reminded of the hours of enthusiasm through which we have been passing during this month. The record of such hours may find an appropriate place in these pages, and I append a picture, drawn by the pen of Miss Mary L. Pendered, with whose novel, "*An Englishman*," recently published, many of my readers are no doubt familiar, of what is still in all our thoughts. It may be "*The Relief of Ladysmith*," or, by the time this reaches my readers, "*The Relief of Mafeking*," joy over which is here depicted; the writer heads it simply

### FROM A WINDOW

Below me lies a shifting sea with a white foam of faces, sharply cut and darkly shadowed where the radiations of electric light stream upon it, softened and warmed where the saffron glow of street lamp or torch falls more kindly—a sea that moves to one continuous roar—the hoarse, inarticulate roar of human throats, and beneath whose surface burns a subterranean fire, the heritage of a great past, the mighty volcanic passion—patriotism!

This morning news came of a siege raised, of a valiant garrison relieved, and the report, like the bite of a tarantula, stung each townsman into temporary madness. The work-hand dropped his tools as if they had been red-hot, and danced out into the street, without a by-your-leave to the foreman; girls eddied about the pavement in giddy, excited groups; the ever-ubiquitous small boy rejoiced with all his lungs in an unexpected holiday; dogs decorated with tri-coloured ribbons ran consequentially between human legs; mothers wheeled their babies to and fro with faces all alight in the joy of this triumph, a triumph that could bring no apparent gain to any of the multitude. A rise of wages, the passing of a bill for shorter work-hours, a movement of reform in the factories—these things would have been received with sceptical apathy: but a victory for England! The natural heart is stirred to its depths, the fire which has been fed by centuries of history and romantic tradition flares up above personal feeling, above individual needs, above all considerations of the commonplace, until in its heat factions and prejudices and petty distinctions melt and completely evaporate. We are all brothers to-day: the respectable citizen and the ne'er-do-weel share one heart between them, for both are glad, and gladness makes men one.

Since the midday dinner-hour town bands have played incessantly. The Volunteers, official and military; the Town Silver Band, correct and ambitious; the Band of Hope, with rattle and squeak; the Salvation Army, strident and strenuous. Now it is 8 P.M. and proud urchins, flourishing news-sheets, fill the air with inexhaustible whoops. The Volunteers halt in the market-place and once more play the National Anthem, with no diminution of ardour, though they have

been playing it nearly all day. Some one speaks from a balcony, alludes to a "glorious victory," to the "relief from suspense," and the "joy of millions of people." There are cheers for the generals, and then "Rule, Britannia;" cheers for our soldiers, and again the brass is accompanied by the cacophonous throat music of the throng, that weird and strangely thrilling sound, as a popular march tune echoes back from the houses. The other bands strike up from different quarters, and the night is thick with clamour of brass and human voices, throb of drum and squeal of piccolo. Then the Volunteers disperse, there is an instant raid on the public-houses, the hotels, even the hospitable breweries. The false moonshine of electricity, the yellow gas rays fall upon a jocund horde, laughing, reeling, brawling incontinently; even the tired mothers push their "prams" gaily and seem warmed into new life—who says we may no longer claim to be Merrie England?

The Englishman, it is well known, loves beer and he loves noise, but above all he loves his country. Give him a national victory to rejoice over, let him shout as much as he likes and drink as much as he can; then see if any mortal could be happier. After all, those Greeks of the Golden Age, whom we are always vaunting, differed little in essentials from these children of a colder clime, a more adult era. Scratch the Briton, and you may find an Athenian; a halo of sentiment shines about the traditions of those far-off days when Bacchus worship was esteemed no crime, and to love one's country was the first duty of a citizen. There is no halo about John Bull, but there's a good deal more sentiment in him than is generally admitted. Let any one who doubts this try to buy one of those small flat tins, bearing the Queen's portrait, that have been sent home recently from the field of battle. In nine cases out of ten his shekels will be refused by Tommy Atkins. There is one of these boxes shown in a window here, accompanied by the statement that the owner has refused ten pounds for it, that he deems it a priceless treasure. Ten pounds is a good deal to a poor man. John Bull may get his halo yet!

